

# History *Today*



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*Indus:  
The Greatest  
Civilisation  
Ever  
Forgotten?*

**CLOSE  
ENCOUNTERS  
OF THE  
COLONIAL  
KIND**

*Unity and Division  
in the Great War*

**CULTURES OF  
CORRUPTION**

*Sex, Lies and  
Government*

*Plus  
Rethinking the  
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Guiding light:  
David Cesarani.

## FROM THE EDITOR

THE WEEKEND OF October 24th and 25th was a bleak one, during which the deaths were announced of three distinguished scholars – John Bossy, Lisa Jardine and David Cesarani – all of whom broke free from history's traditional confines.

John Bossy, who has died aged 82, produced studies of Elizabethan Catholicism and espionage that were marked by their literary elegance and pioneering adoption of methodologies derived from other fields, such as anthropology, as well as other historical traditions, especially those of France and Germany. His masterpiece, *Christianity in the West* (1985), charted the shift from unity to division among believers, a process Bossy attributed to the early modern state's increasing emphasis on the prohibitions of the Old Testament Decalogue. Remarkably, his 1991 study, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair*, won the Crime Writers' Association Golden Dagger for non-fiction, worthy recognition of his peerless prose style. As Professor of Early Modern History at York he was a generous mentor to generations of students.

Lisa Jardine, 71, was the most public of public intellectuals for whom the label 'historian' is inadequate. Having begun her studies at Cambridge as a mathematician, she switched to English and became a historian of science, a reflection of her genre-busting, interdisciplinary approach, which led to her becoming the head of Britain's Human Embryology and Fertility Authority, where her humane empathy and scientific knowledge combined brilliantly. She was a one-woman refutation of C.P. Snow's theory of Two Cultures. She became, like her father, Jacob Bronowski, on whose biography she was working at her death, a skilled broadcaster.

David Cesarani, whose death at just 58 came as the greatest shock of all, looked into the darkest recesses of human history: his 2004 biography of the ideologically driven Nazi bureaucrat Adolf Eichmann is unlikely to be surpassed and his forthcoming study of the Final Solution is awaited eagerly. No one in Britain did more for Holocaust education. Yet, despite his chosen subject matter, David was a man of sunny disposition, whose impish humour and youthful energy lit up a room. He, along with John Bossy and Lisa Jardine, will live on in their remarkable bodies of work and the fond memories of their many friends and colleagues.

*Paul Lay*



# HistoryMatters

Deafness • Wartime Media • Green Belt • Napoleon in Corsica



Hearing things:  
an engraving of  
hearing aids from  
*Exercitationes  
Practicæ circa  
Medendi Methodum*  
by Frederik  
Dekkers, 1694.

bility. How far back can we look for evidence of deafness? Let us start by looking at some of the first references to deafness in the historical record.

The earliest written record of hearing loss is believed to date from 1550 BC in Ancient Egypt. The Ebers Papyrus offers a remedy for 'Ear-That-Hears-Badly': injecting olive oil, red lead, ant eggs, bat wings and goat urine into the ears. Whether 'Ear-That-Hears-Badly' refers to temporary hearing loss caused by simple wax build up, which may have actually been treatable with olive oil (although perhaps not ant eggs), the Ancient Egyptians were instructed to be kind to disabled individuals, including the deaf.

**A remedy:  
inject olive oil,  
red lead, ant  
eggs, bat wings  
and goat urine  
into the ears**

In Greece, attitudes were informed by the opinions of individuals, such as Aristotle and Plato, who around 350 BC wrote that the ability to reason was intrinsically linked with the ability to speak and therefore individuals who were deaf 'from the first' (either from birth or before they learned to speak) would inevitably be unintelligent. This attitude prevailed throughout much of history and those who were unable to speak, including many deaf individuals, were rarely considered independent adults with access to full civil liberties.

It is Plato who also gives us the first reference to sign language, in his dialogue on language and reality, *Cratylus*: 'If we had no voice or tongue, and wished to make things clear to one another, should we not try, as dumb [mute] people actually do, to make signs with our hands and head and person generally?' Despite recognizing that people communicate through sign, its value is not acknowledged.

The earliest reference to specific signs, rather than just the act of signing, actually comes not from those used by deaf individuals but

## No Longer Deaf to the Past

The history of deafness is as old as humanity.

**Alison Atkin**

AN ESTIMATED 10 per cent of the world's population is, to some degree, deaf. That is 700 million individuals, ranging from those who have mild hearing loss and may or may not rely on hearing aids or lip-reading, to those who communicate using sign language and are part of a diverse Deaf culture.

There are two types of deafness:

conductive hearing loss occurs when sounds cannot make it to the inner ear, while sensorineural hearing loss occurs when the cells or nerves in the inner ear cannot receive or transmit sounds. Both types can be present from birth or acquired throughout life and neither is new to human history.

Yet, despite its existence, there is little reference to deafness by historians or archaeologists, except for those focused on the study of dis-

by monks. In the early 10th century, monks in Burgundy created a series of hand signals to communicate without speaking in order to keep their strict vows of silence. Early observers noted that the signals 'would have been sufficient if they lost the use of their tongues' and Cluniac sign language, as it came to be known, had an enormous influence on monastic life throughout Europe. It is credited with being the inspiration for the manual alphabet (finger-spelling) developed by the Spanish Benedictine Pedro Ponce de Leon at the first deaf school in the mid-1500s.

There is written evidence of an aid for hearing going back to the Romans, albeit in the form of the consul, Hadrianus, cupping his hands behind his ears. However, the earliest mention of the creation of a hearing aid comes in the *Magiae Naturalis* of 1588 by the Neapolitan polymath Giambattista della Porta, in which he describes horns shaped like the ears of animals known to have excellent hearing (though this may be an attempt to create something more akin to a telescope for sound). The first ear trumpets were developed by Paolo Aproino, a pupil of Galileo's, in the 1610s, although they were not in common use until the end of that century.

Thus, we have written evidence for treating hearing loss, early sign language, hearing aids and some changing attitudes to deaf individuals dating back to 3,500 years ago. But what about before then?

When it comes to studying the skeletal remains of individuals from the distant past for evidence of deafness, we are limited to conductive hearing loss and only to those cases that resulted in bony changes that will survive after death (with the exception of the mummy of Pum II, who had a perforated eardrum). Individuals with sensorineural hearing loss will leave no evidence of deafness after death and decomposition.

The earliest known example of skeletal evidence associated with hearing loss in humans dates back to more than 10,000 years ago.

Many of those buried at Shanidar Cave, an archaeological site located on Mount Bradost in Iraqi Kurdistan, had external auditory exostoses (bony growths in the ear canal), which in two individuals is severe enough to have impacted on their ability to hear. However, in the same cave system, the date for deafness can potentially be pushed back even further to our close relatives, as Shanidar I – a Neanderthal skeleton dating to between 45,000 and 35,000 years old – has similar exostoses. There are also numerous examples in the more recent past of individuals with conductive hearing loss, either in one or both ears, being given unique burial treatments, such as a congenitally deaf Roman child from Britain, who was buried face down in a stone coffin, capped with roof tiles.

Deaf individuals were present in the past and probably in greater number than previously accounted for by historians and archaeologists, especially when we consider illnesses and injuries associated with hearing loss that are now preventable or treatable. We should encourage more research into understanding this common human experience. To paint the whole picture, researchers need to look at both the biological and the historical records.

Alison Atkin is a Doctoral Researcher in Osteoarchaeology at the University of Sheffield.

## Propaganda Sheets?

Trust in the press declined during the Second World War, as did its influence.

Guy Hodgson

AS THE FIRST SHOTS were fired in the Second World War, the British newspaper industry was at its zenith. The country was served by 34 daily newspapers (nine of them national); there were 16 national and provincial Sundays and three London evenings were supplemented by a further 77 in towns and cities across the nation. A 1934 survey conducted by Political and Economic Planning reported that, on average, 100 British families bought between them 95 morning papers and 58 evenings a day and 130 Sunday newspapers every week. The press barons Lords Beaverbrook and Rothermere formed their own political party in the 1930s and the former would serve in Churchill's Cabinet during the war. Profits rose during the conflict and circulations increased by an average of 86.5 per cent from 1937 to 1947. It seems a golden age. But not quite.

The war saw a decline in newspapers' influence. Paradoxically, as more people bought its editions, Fleet Street's position as the first point for news declined from 1939 to 1945, as radio arrived in readers' homes. By 1944 the BBC's 9pm radio news programme was estimated to reach up to 50 per cent of the population and the BBC recorded its audience at 34 million (out of a population of 48 million). The 'wireless' had assumed the greatest prominence as purveyor of wartime events and retained the trust of the public that had been lost to newspapers. The First World War had eroded faith in what was being reported and this decline in trust was hastened when the public, brought into the 'front line' for the first time by the Blitz, could compare what was appearing on the front pages to what was happening outside their front doors. A report for Home Intelligence in 1941 noted: 'There is much underlying scepticism about the news.'

The problems facing Fleet Street in

### Alternative Histories by Rob Murray



"When I said to invite the King's mother-in-law, I really did just mean the current one..."





Blitz spirit: the *Daily Mirror*, June 5th, 1940.

the Second World War were practical and philosophical. Apart from the logistical difficulties of producing editions while bombs were falling – 11 incendiaries landed on the roof of the *Manchester Guardian* on December 23rd, 1940 – there was also the issue of transporting newspapers when roads and rail lines were damaged or destroyed. Production difficulties were compounded by reduced resources: by the end of 1943, more than a third of the nation's 9,000 journalists had been called up by the armed forces; more were employed by the government; and only around 25 per cent of staff photographers remained in Fleet Street. Newsprint, too, was rationed and restrictions were put on circulation so that newspapers could increase sales only by reducing the number of their pages. The first Royal Commission on the Press, which assembled between 1947 and 1949, recorded that newspapers were reduced by as much as 80 per cent between 1939 and 1945, adding: 'Much news must be "suppressed" for this reason alone and severe compression makes inaccuracy and distortion difficult to avoid. The likelihood that the Press will be subject of complaints is increased.'

## Reports on bombing were curtailed, casualty numbers distorted if they appeared at all and targets camouflaged

Another practical difficulty was the censor. Every war-related report had to endure trial by blue pencil and an official from the Ministry of Information frequently had a desk in newspaper offices. News was also controlled because much of it stemmed from the news agencies, such as Reuters and the Press Association, and their reports were altered at source. In theory this censorship was 'voluntary' but, as the chief censor George Thomson noted, editors were issued with such a barrage of D-notices (an official government request not to publish an item) that the restrictions 'covered nearly every conceivable human activity'. Reports on bombing were curtailed, casualty numbers distorted when they appeared at all and targets camouflaged so that raids on Bristol, for example, would be reported as a 'South-west town'. Photographs were put into a pool for general distribution and subject to lengthy delay.

Unsurprisingly, this caused frustration among journalists whose *raison d'être* was to produce news as promptly and accurately as possible. The *Daily Express* vented its anger by reporting that Britain might soon have to drop leaflets on itself to tell its people how the war was going, although there were several instances, the imminent German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 being a prime example, when newspapers decided to suppress information of their own accord.

This suggested a mood of acquiescence. Reluctance to hand the enemy propaganda material ensured the press rarely held national or local government to account and British morale was reported as being resolutely, and unwaveringly, upbeat. When the Luftwaffe raided, emphasis was laid on the bombs that hit schools, churches, hospitals and homes while the RAF's sorties always destroyed munitions factories, airfields and transport infrastructure. There were frequent exceptions to the smooth co-operation between Fleet Street and the authorities – the suppression of the *Daily Worker* and the threat by Churchill to close the *Daily Mirror* after a Zec cartoon in 1942 being the most blatant examples – but the threat of sanction and the potential for a wartime *British Gazette*, the government-sponsored newspaper published during the General Strike of 1926, ensured general compliance.

The result was that reporting of the war was distorted. Charles Lynch, of Reuters, infamously recorded that it was humiliating to revisit what journalists produced: 'It was crap ... We were a propaganda arm of our governments.' But Cyril Dunn, a *Yorkshire Post* journalist who would later work for the *Observer*, was more specific. Visiting survivors of a bombed-out pub, he met a man who wanted only to 'get out of here' and a woman who said: 'If only I could feel it was worth it.' Evans noted their quotes in his notebook and then ignored them. 'I wrote the usual story about the cheerful courage and determined endurance of the Manchester folk.'

Guy Hodgson is author of *War Torn: Manchester, its Newspapers and the Luftwaffe's Christmas Blitz of 1940* (University of Chester Press, 2015).

# The Green Belt

What was the original purpose of an idea now threatened by a dire need for housing?

**Raymond Smith**

WHEN BRITAIN'S coalition government set out to simplify the planning system in 2013 it was clear that they also hoped to make life easier (and more profitable) for developers. Ultimately, this approach came back to bite them in the Green Belt: it antagonised core voters and policies were repackaged rather than appear as an actual U-turn, leaving local councils to take the flak.

A number of elements combined to produce this problem, which will continue to cause headaches for the current Conservative government. For decades, planning authorities were required to have enough land allocated for new housing to meet the expected demand for five years, but there was little sanction on them if they did not. On top of this, there was the removal of guidance for calculating the number of new dwellings needed. Consultancies moved into this vacuum and, using opaque methods, have come up with higher figures, which make it harder for councils to find enough land, leaving them open to hostile planning applications from developers. In some areas the result has been councils 'rolling back' the Green Belt (in other words, introducing plans to build on it). As Britain's, and especially England's, population increases there is a dire need for more housing. How much and where is less clear.

So what was the original intention for the Green Belt? It was not part of a vision of idyllic countryside dappled with the homes of the bourgeoisie using the much-expanded dwellings of farm labourers; rather, it was meant for a very different purpose and for a much wider cross-section of society. Inevitably, though, the open land around any metropolis will become a destination for wealthier homeowners, regardless of whether it is classified as Green Belt.

The appreciation of green areas around towns as potential recreational refuges has been long seen. In the 1820s the pioneer landscape architect J.C. Loudon envisaged cities as consisting of a series of concentric rings of buildings

and open, green areas. The role of these green areas came to be fulfilled by the parks that characterised Victorian cities. By the end of the century, with the availability of rail transport, campaigners for green spaces were setting their sights further afield – the open rural countryside was their destination, but this was an ever-receding goal.

The architect and town planner Raymond Unwin may have been responsible for the term Green Belt in the 1920s. For him it was to be a linear buffer zone between the commercial zones of towns and their residential areas. He was also concerned with the efficient use of land and feared that ribbon development along roads would make the backlands inaccessible for further growth. He could not have foreseen the countrywide inflation in land

and allow building in that space.

So should the Green Belt still be protected? It might seem hard for a modern environmentalist, faced with the tasks of creating sustainable living spaces for a growing population, to defend these enclaves of prosperity and still harder for social reformers, but there are profound arguments in favour of Green Belts, in particular, their original role as 'open spaces' for exercise, to use the late 19th-century terminology, and as the 'green lungs' of the late 20th-century. While not all of the land is especially scenic, it is its undeveloped character that is important, even though it is not necessarily a 'wild Romantic beauty'.

More significantly, in spite of the intensity of modern agriculture, the Green Belt is a wildlife resource. It remains vital, not just for the ecosystem services that it provides for humanity, but also for the natural world's intrinsic right to exist. In these times of climate change, it is also essential that linked green areas are retained to provide corridors for animals and plants to migrate as their climatic niches move. The ever-growing calls to build on the Green Belt in order to solve a very real housing shortage are based on erroneous assumptions:

new building does not have to be on greenfield; there is plenty of brown-field, which, although less profitable, is suitable for re-use. It is also wrong to assume that housing demand is location specific. Much of the demand is due to migration into the South-east and London (domestic and from overseas). Given the right incentives, people will move to new regions, but promoting other areas requires government policies based on strategic economic thinking.

Responding to the demand for housing by abandoning the Green Belt to development is the easy solution. The Green Belt may not have turned out quite as it was planned, but it is increasingly used for urban recreation and, if protected, could be of ever greater environmental value.

**Raymond Smith** is an environmental historian with a particular interest in brownfield policy.



**Going, going, gone: *The March of Bricks and Mortar*, by George Cruikshank, 1829.**

value over the latter part of the 20th century, making it viable to demolish ribbon development to open up the land behind.

In the 1930s a Green Belt was created around London by the city's local authorities who bought land. However the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act created a viable 'planning permission' system, which provided a cheaper alternative to purchase that could easily be applied to far larger areas. The aim of Green Belts created under this new system was, as set out in a circular of 1955, to contain towns and, especially, metropolises like London. This is why new towns have been built as overspill beyond the Green Belt. But, in contrast to Unwin, the aim was not to treat Green Belts as long-term land banks. It was about resisting pressure to build. Almost throughout its life there have been calls to reduce the Green Belt



## Rethinking Napoleon's Roots

How far did Napoleon's Corsican childhood and his father's role in the island's brief period of autonomy influence his later life?

**Sebastien R. Le Morillon**

TWO CENTURIES ON from Waterloo, Napoleon continues to fascinate. Yet surprisingly little attention is given to Napoleon's origins and the way they shaped his life.

Napoleon was born in Corsica in 1769, three months after royal French forces brought an end to its 40-year period of autonomy. Just 20 years before the storming of the Bastille and the beginning of French Revolution, this invasion resulted in the island's annexation to France the following year.

How much were Napoleon's commitments to an efficient central administration, the ending of rural lawlessness, the promotion of science and the arts, the abolition of feudalism and the most ambitious codification of laws since the fall of the Roman Empire a result of the lessons of Corsica's 40-year period of autonomy?

While conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Corsica during 2012–13, I examined household registers, baptismal records, letters and journals dating back to between the 14th and 18th centuries in Bastia, the then Corsican capital, with the hope that doing so might also resolve a debate concerning the accurate location of Napoleon's christening.

This research led to the discovery that Napoleon's father, Carlo Buonaparte, was probably secretary to, and one of the most trusted associates of, Pasquale Paoli, the democratically elected leader of the unrecognised Corsican Republic, until the Battle of Ponte Novu signalled an end to self-rule in 1769.

Research suggests that Paoli, who led a successful revolt against the Genoese, designed a constitution favouring representative democracy, which was unlike any other codified document of its time. His constitutional experiment sought to separate the executive and the legislature; vendettas were banned; taxation was to consist of a fixed hearth-tax and levies



**Corsican rising: Napoleon, 1792, as Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Battalion of Corsica by Felix Philippoteaux, 1834.**

relative to property size; and admittance into government was to be largely based on the popular vote. Paoli and other autonomists even established a functioning university in Corte – Corsica's former capital – before French annexation. Corsica was so politically advanced for its time that it elicited the admiration of Rousseau, Voltaire and James Boswell.

At the request of Matteo Buttafoco, a supporter of Corsican autonomy and a French-speaking advocate for the unrecognised Corsican republic, Rousseau made recommendations for a codified legal system protected by a democratic constitution that would unify the Corsican people. His proposal, the *Projet de Constitution pour la Corse*, had to wait for publication until 1861, almost a century later.

Voltaire, in his *Précis du Siècle de Louis XV* (1808), praised Corsican culture:

***Corsica was so politically advanced that it elicited the admiration of Rousseau, Voltaire and James Boswell***

*The principal weapon of the Corsicans was their courage. This courage was so great that in one of these battles, near a river named Golo, they made a rampart of their dead in order to have the time to reload behind them before making a necessary retreat ... Bravery is found everywhere, but such actions aren't seen except among free people.*

Even though Carlo Buonaparte hastily switched his alliance to France after the invasion, dined with the military commander Comte de Vaux two months after occupation and further pursued collaboration with the French, it is difficult to argue that the ideas put forward by Paoli's regime did not affect Corsicans born after the 1740s.

What is more, without the island's 40-year period of autonomy, Carlo would have neither gained experience in governmental affairs nor a political consciousness, experiences which were passed down to his children.

The French diplomat Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne's *Memoires de Napoleon Bonaparte* (1831) implies that Corsica's autonomous movement also shaped the young Napoleon's political mindset. The author had been both an intimate friend and a classmate of Napoleon at the military school of Brienne in Champagne and de Bourrienne described the rapport he had with the future Emperor of the French:

*I was one among those of his youthful comrades who could best accommodate themselves to his stern character. His natural reserve, his disposition to meditate on the conquest of Corsica, and the impressions he had received in childhood respecting the misfortunes of his country and his family, rendered his general demeanour.*

That Corsica's 40-year period of autonomy impressed Napoleon at an early age was confirmed by a comment made in his formative years:

*On Corsica I was given life, and with that life I was also given a fierce love for my ill-starred homeland and fierce desire for her independence. I too shall one day be a 'Paoli'.*

**Sebastien R. Le Morillon** is a Research Assistant in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University, New York.

# MonthsPast DECEMBER

By Richard Cavendish



DECEMBER 28TH 1065

## The consecration of Westminster Abbey

THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH of St Peter at Westminster, now known as Westminster Abbey, is officially neither an abbey nor a cathedral. Elizabeth I made it a Royal Peculiar in 1560, which means that the dean and chapter answer directly to the sovereign. It is certainly royal and also peculiar in the sense of remarkable. English and later British kings and queens have been crowned there for centuries. Some of them have been married there and many buried in it, too, and the building is packed with the tombs and monuments of famous people.

The story of the great church starts in a mixture of legend and history some 1,400 years ago. It stands on what was once Thorney Island, so named because

it was full of tangled thickets of brambles and, as a consequence, 'thorny'. The island was just off the north bank of the Thames, where two little branches of the River Tyburn flowed into marshy country some two miles to the west of the old Roman city of London. It was claimed that King Sebert of the East Saxons, then the ruler of London and a former pagan, built a church on the island after being converted to Christianity by a mission led by a man called Mellitus, who was Bishop of London from AD 604.

The Thames was well stocked with fish in those days and tradition also had it that St Peter appeared to a young fisherman and demanded that a church dedicated to him be constructed on Thorney Island – and it was. Another story had St Peter appearing to Mellitus on the day when Sebert's church was consecrated and conducting the ceremony himself. In later centuries Thames fishermen regularly gave gifts of salmon to the abbey on St Peter's Day, June 29th, and the Fishmongers' Company still presents a salmon to Westminster Abbey every year.

How much truth there is in all this is uncertain, but a later East Saxon king may have given land to the Thorney Island church in the eighth century. In the 960s King Edgar of England and St Dunstan, Bishop of London and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury, installed or reinstalled a small community of Benedictine monks in Westminster, almost certainly on Thorney Island.

There was a Benedictine community on the island when Edward the Confessor became King of England in 1042. A son of Ethelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy, born about 1005, Edward spent most of his early life in Normandy after 1013, when England was taken over by the Danes under Sweyn Forkbeard and then Cnut. Invited back by the last Danish king, who was his half-brother, he succeeded peacefully to the English throne in 1042.

While in exile in Normandy, Edward

had sworn a solemn oath that, if he ever became King of England, he would go on pilgrimage to St Peter's in Rome to give thanks, but when the time came his advisers told him that it was not politically advisable. Pope Leo IX released him from his vow on condition that he built or restored a monastery dedicated to St Peter. Edward was a deeply pious man and he accepted the obligation with exemplary thoroughness. He chose the Benedictine monastery on Thorney Island and to make sure things were done properly he installed himself in a palace close to the abbey, between the river bank and what is now the street called Whitehall. The monks and lay brothers had diligently cleared Thorney Island of its thorns and made it a more habitable place. Edward now appointed a new abbot, brought in more monks and decided to build a far grander abbey church in the Norman style of the day. It was there that he intended to be buried.

The work on the church took many years and Edward had it formally consecrated in December 1065, though he was too ill to be present at the ceremony himself. He died only a week later on January 5th, 1066 and was buried in the church in front of the high altar on the following day. After the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror had himself crowned and anointed King of England in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day in 1066, probably to emphasise his claim to be Edward the Confessor's legitimate successor.

Edward the Confessor was canonised as a saint in 1161. In 1245 his fervent admirer, Henry III, began a massive programme of rebuilding and enlarging the Confessor's church. He spent a fortune on it and it was Henry who gave Westminster Abbey its lasting architectural character. In 1269 he helped to carry the Confessor's remains to a special chapel behind the high altar where they have remained through all the centuries since. When he died in 1272, Henry was buried in St Edward's chapel.

**Peter's pride: Edward the Confessor watches the building of Westminster Abbey, as imagined in Hutchinson's *Story of the British Nation*, 1923.**



DECEMBER 10TH 1815

## Ada Lovelace born in London

NOW HAILED as the world's pioneer computer programmer, she was the only legitimate child of Lord Byron, the poet, though he had plenty of illegitimate offspring. Her mother was Annabella Millbanke, who was Byron's polar opposite. Where he was wildly romantic, bisexual, depressive and a colossal talent, she was narrowly religious, withdrawn, cold and prim. They married in their 20s early in 1815 and Ada was born in their London mansion near Hyde Park Corner. Byron was already feeling trapped.

The new arrival was named Augusta after her father's half-sister Augusta Leigh, but Annabella had suspicions about Byron's relationship with Augusta and preferred to call the child Ada. When Ada was a few weeks old Annabella took her away to visit her family in Leicestershire. She never



Computer love:  
Ada Lovelace, by  
Margaret Sarah  
Carpenter, 1835.

returned to Byron and in April 1816 he signed a formal deed of separation and left the country for good. He died in Greece in 1824 when Ada was eight years old. She had no memory of him at all, but she often thought about him, wistfully.

Annabella had Ada educated at home by tutors and had her well grounded in science and mathematics to suppress any poetical leanings. Ada was brilliantly intelligent and

took to maths like a cygnet to water. Through her father's family and friends she came to move in smart London social circles and at 17 in 1833 she was presented at court, but she was far more excited less than a month later when she went to a party where she met Charles Babbage.

Babbage was an outstanding mathematician who was working on what he called his 'analytical engine',

to carry out abstruse calculations. It was the forerunner of the computer. He and Ada took to each other immediately. They kept in close touch and she helped him with his work.

In 1835, aged 19, Ada married a Lord King, who was soon created Earl of Lovelace, which made her Countess of Lovelace. They would have three children, but she continued to work with Babbage. In the 1840s she translated an article about his analytical engine by an Italian mathematician, adding her own explanations and ideas. They included a method for calculating a sequence of numbers (known as Bernoulli numbers) which would have worked if Babbage's machine had been completed and is now considered the first computer programme.

Ada always felt that there was poetry in higher mathematics. Her relationship with her mother grew increasingly strained and, when she died in agony of cancer in 1852 aged 36, at her request she was buried next to her father in the village church at Hucknall in Nottinghamshire.

DECEMBER 24TH 1865

## The Ku Klux Klan founded

THE WAR Between the States ended in 1865 with the North victorious and the Confederate South defeated. Slavery in the South was now illegal, the former slaves had the vote and groups of white Republicans started collecting batches of them and escorting them to the polls. The situation was resented and small white terrorist groups formed at various places to keep the blacks down and white supremacy intact. Far the best known would be the Ku Klux Klan.

The Klan began in Tennessee, in the small town of Pulaski, near Memphis. It was founded by Confederate army veterans at a drinking club there and the strange but memorable name was a combination of 'clan' and the Greek word kuklos, meaning 'circle' or, in this case, social club. Dressed up in scary costumes with hoods and masks, members rode about at night threatening and



frightening blacks. They demanded that blacks either vote Democrat or not vote at all. They met defiance with beatings, whippings and sometimes murder. They

In the hood: two  
members of the  
Ku Klux Klan,  
c.1870.

burned blacks' houses down and drove black farmers off their land and they extended their hostilities to southern whites who opposed them and the so-called 'carpetbaggers', white infiltrators from the North.

The Klan loved weird titles, Grand Dragon and such, and a former Confederate cavalry general, Nathan Bedford Forrest, is said to have been for a time the Klan's leader as Grand Imperial Wizard. In 1868 he said that the Klan had well over 500,000 members in the southern states, but that he was not involved.

The original Klan faded away in the 1870s after the federal government had taken action and many members had been arrested and punished, but it had helped to make the South a Democrat political stronghold. It was refounded in 1915, inspired by the film *The Birth of a Nation* by the pioneering Hollywood director D.W. Griffith, which shone an admiring light on the original Klan. It has existed with very slowly declining influence ever since.









Steatite seal from the Indus valley, c.2500 BC. The script is still undeciphered.

# LOST AND FOUND

Though it may be the equal of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, the civilisation that arose in the Indus valley around 5,000 years ago was only discovered in the early 20th century. **Andrew Robinson** looks at what we know about this extraordinary culture and how much more there is to unearth.

**P**ERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS STATEMENT about the Indus civilisation is the opening paragraph of an article in the *Illustrated London News* published in 1924 by John Marshall, director general of the Archaeological Survey of India: 'Not often has it been given to archaeologists, as it was given to [Heinrich] Schliemann at Tiryns and Mycenae, or to [Aurel] Stein in the deserts of Turkestan, to light upon the remains of a long-forgotten civilisation. It looks, however, at this moment, as if we are on the threshold of such a discovery in the plains of the Indus.'

Subsequent Indus excavations certainly made an impression on the young Kenneth Clark. In *Civilisation*, Clark, while pondering the non-western beginnings of civilisation two-and-a-half millennia before the classical Greeks, observed in 1969:

*Three or four times in history man has made a leap forward that would have been unthinkable under ordinary evolutionary conditions. One such time was about the year 3000 BC, when quite suddenly civilisation appeared, not only in Egypt and Mesopotamia but also in the Indus Valley; another was in the sixth century BC, when there was not only the miracle of Ionia and Greece ... but also in India a spiritual enlightenment that has perhaps never been equalled.*

Ancient Egypt and ancient Mesopotamia are familiar to the world, because of their art, architecture and royal burials and extensive ►

## INDUS CIVILISATION

references in Greek and Roman literature. So, of course, are the glories of classical Greece and, perhaps less so, the spirituality of Buddhist India and the theology of early Hinduism recorded in the Vedic literature, which was composed in the period 1500-500 BC. Not so familiar, however, is the civilisation that appeared in the Indus valley in the first half of the third millennium BC.

The Indus civilisation was, in its unique way, as extraordinary as those of Mesopotamia and Egypt. But it disappeared around 1800 BC and left no direct legacy in the Indian subcontinent. Neither Alexander the Great, who invaded India from the north-west in the fourth century BC, nor Asoka, the great, Buddhist-oriented emperor who ruled most of the subcontinent in the third century, was even dimly aware of the Indus civilisation; nor were the Arab, Mughal and European colonial rulers of India. Indeed, the Indus civilisation remained altogether invisible until the 1920s. Ever since, scholars have been trying to elucidate its mysteries, including the meanings encoded in its aesthetically exquisite but stubbornly undeciphered writing system, and thereby to elevate this most significant of 'lost' civilisations to the position it deserves, both in the history of South Asia and that of the world.

**A**RCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE IDENTIFIED well over a thousand settlements belonging to the Indus civilisation's 'Mature' phase (2600-1900 BC), of which less than ten per cent have been excavated. They cover at least 800,000 square kilometres of what in 1947 became Pakistan and India, an area approximately a quarter of the size of western Europe, with an original population of around one million people (the same as that of ancient Rome at its height). This was the most extensive urban culture of its time, about twice the size of its equivalent in Mesopotamia or Egypt. Most Indus settlements were villages, but some were towns and at least five were substantial cities. The two largest cities, Mohenjo-daro (a Unesco World Heritage Site) and Harappa, located some 600 kilometres apart beside the Indus river and one of its many tributaries, were comparable with cities such as Ur in Mesopotamia and Memphis in Egypt.

These cities, despite their excellent brick-built construction, do not boast pyramids, palaces, temples, statues and graves or hoards of gold like those found in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Their grandest building, the so-called Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro, is the world's earliest public water tank, with two wide staircases on the north and south leading down to a brick floor at a maximum depth of 2.4 metres, made watertight by a thick layer of bitumen. Though technically impressive for its time, the Great Bath was totally unadorned by carving or painting, at least so far as we know.

Yet, Indus society, fed by crops watered by the great river and its many tributaries flowing from the Himalayas, was remarkably productive and sophisticated in other ways. The Indus dwellers constructed ocean-going merchant ships that sailed as far as the Persian Gulf and the river-based cities of Mesopotamia, where Indus jewellery, weights, inscribed seals and other objects have been excavated, dating back to around 2500 BC. Mesopotamian cuneiform inscriptions refer to the Indus region by the name *Meluhha*, the precise meaning of which is unknown. The Indus cities' advanced drainage and sanitation was two millennia ahead of that of the Roman Empire; besides the Great Bath, it included magnificent circular wells, elaborate drains running beneath corbelled arches and the world's first known toilets. Their well-planned streets, generally laid out in the cardinal directions, put to shame all but the town planning of the 20th century. Some of their personal ornaments, such as the necklaces of finely drilled, biconical carnelian

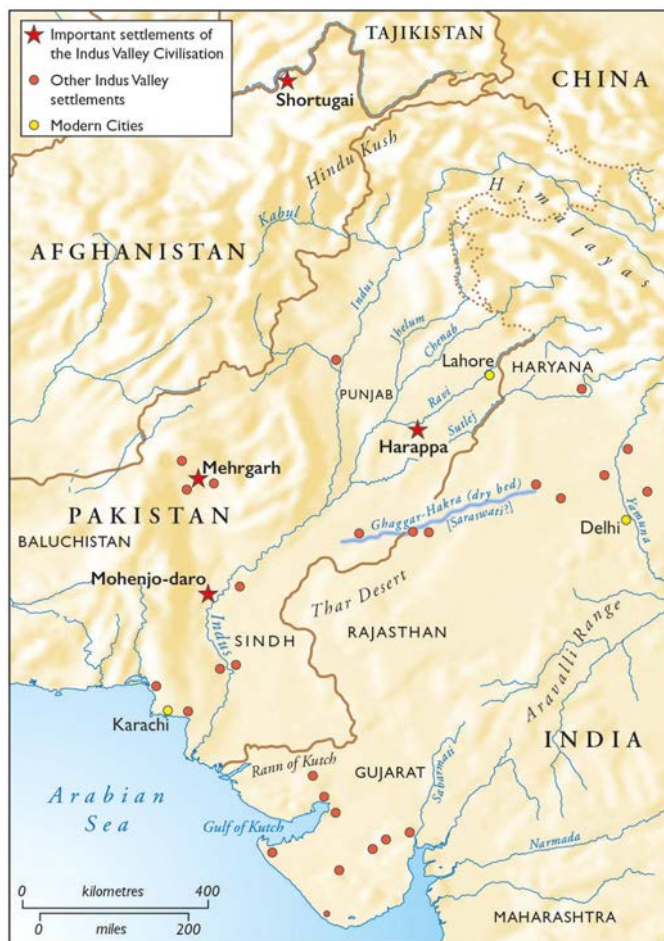


The 'Priest-King' from Mohenjo-daro, 2600 BC, Sindh province, Pakistan.

beads up to 13 centimetres in length found in the royal cemetery of Ur in Mesopotamia, rival the treasures of the Egyptian pharaohs. Their binary/decimal system of standardised stone weights is unique in the ancient world, suggesting a highly developed economy. The partially pictographic characters and animal and human motifs of the tantalising Indus script, inscribed on small seal stones and terracotta tablets, occasionally on metal, form 'little masterpieces of controlled realism, with a monumental strength in one sense out of all proportion to their size and in another entirely related to it', observed the best-known Indus excavator, Mortimer Wheeler. Once seen, the seal stones are never forgotten; witness the more than a hundred differing decipherments of the Indus script proffered since the 1920s by scholars, some of them highly distinguished academics such as Flinders Petrie (not to mention numerous amateurs and cranks).

INDUS VALLEY archaeology has come a long way in almost a century. Nonetheless, it throws up many more unanswered fundamental questions than the archaeology of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt (and China). Was the civilisation a wholly indigenous development, apparently emerging from Baluchistan, where there is ample evidence of village settlement at Mehrgarh as early as 7000 BC? Or was it influenced





Settlements of the Indus valley civilisation located in modern Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

by the growth of civilisation in not-so-distant Mesopotamia during the fourth millennium BC? What type of authority held together such an evidently organised, uniform and widespread society, if it truly did manage to prosper without palaces, royal graves, temples, powerful rulers and even priests? Why does the Indus civilisation offer no definite evidence of warfare, in the form of defensive fortifications, metal weapons and warriors: a situation without parallel in war-addicted ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and China? Was the Indus religion the origin of Hinduism? Or is the apparent resemblance of some Indus seal iconography and practices to much later Hindu iconography and practices, such as the worship of the god Shiva and the caste system, based on wishful thinking? Does its seeming austerity have any relationship with Buddhism? Is the Indus language that is written in the script (assuming only a single language) related to still-existing Indian languages, such as the Dravidian languages of south India or the Sanskrit language of north India? Lastly, why did the civilisation decline after about 1900 BC and why did it leave no trace in the historical record? The characters of the script seem to have become indecipherable almost 4,000 years ago with the civilisation's decline. They certainly bear no resemblance to the next writing that appeared in India, after an enormous gap of ►

*Why does the Indus civilisation offer no definite evidence, in the form of defensive fortifications, metal weapons and warriors?*



Excavations at Mohenjo-daro, topped by a much later Buddhist stupa.





Above: jewellery of the Indus civilisation, c.3000 BC.  
Right: a jade and gold necklace, with pendants in agate and jasper, c.2000 BC.



a millennium and a half: the Brahmi and Kharosthi alphabetic scripts that were used to write the rock and pillar inscriptions of Asoka.

Scores of archaeologists and linguists, from Europe, Russia, India and Pakistan, Japan and the United States, have suggested answers to these fascinating questions. Inevitably they have been obliged to speculate; there can be no overall consensus, for lack of sufficient archaeological evidence and because the Indus script is mute.

To complicate matters, some of the intellectual debates have acquired a partisan political edge. The discovery of the Indus civilisation naturally promoted national pride during India's movement towards independence from British rule. Its first excavator, Marshall, started the trend in 1931 by claiming that 'the religion of the Indus peoples ... is so characteristically Indian as hardly to be distinguishable from living Hinduism'. India's future prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, enthused in 1946 after visits to Mohenjo-daro:

*Astonishing thought: that any culture or civilisation should have this continuity for five or six thousand years or more ... It is surprising how much there is in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa which reminds one of persisting traditions and habits – popular ritual, craftsmanship, even some fashions in dress.*

Since then, however, and especially since the 1980s, Hindu nationalists in India have gone much further, disregarding archaeological and linguistic evidence in support of an openly political agenda. They are keen

to recruit the Indus civilisation as the *fons et origo* of Indian civilisation: the originator of the language of the Vedic literature, Sanskrit, which they view as an indigenous language rather than as one descendant among many of a proto-Indo-European language that originated outside the subcontinent. They also view the Indus civilisation as the begetter of an early form of Hinduism untainted by foreigners, such as the Aryans, who are generally supposed by scholars to have migrated into India from the north-west speaking an early form of Vedic Sanskrit. Thus, Hindu nationalists promote the Indus civilisation as the source of a continuous Indian identity dating back more than five millennia.

**A**ROUND 2000, CERTAIN INDIAN HISTORIANS wishing to rewrite school textbooks at the behest of India's new nationalist (BJP) government, appealed to a new book, *The Deciphered Indus Script*, written by N. Jha and N.S. Rajaram, which made astounding claims. The Indus script was apparently even older than had been thought, dating back to the mid-fourth millennium, which would make it the world's oldest readable writing, pre-dating Mesopotamian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphs. It employed some kind of alphabet, two millennia older than the world's earliest-known alphabets from the Near East. Most sensationally of all, at least for Indians, its inscriptions could be read in Vedic Sanskrit; one of them was found to mention a crucial river, the Saraswati, albeit obliquely. This river, highly revered in the Rigveda, is



not visible today above ground as a single stream, but is known to have been a major river during the Indus civilisation. Surface surveys on the Pakistani side of the India/Pakistan desert border region conducted in the 1970s and after have traced much, though not all, of the Saraswati's former course, part of which flowed in parallel with the Indus rather than as its tributary. In the course of their surveying, Pakistani archaeologists stumbled upon close to 200 settlements from the Mature phase of the Indus civilisation clustering along the Saraswati (almost all of which, including a city, await excavation).

FURTHER SUPPORT for the Hindu nationalist view seemed to come in the form of an excavation photograph from the 1920s showing a broken Indus seal inscription depicting the hindquarters of an animal, accompanied by four characters. Jha and Rajaram claimed that the animal was a horse, as shown in a 'computer enhanced' drawing published by them; and that the four characters could be read, in Vedic Sanskrit, as *ar ko ha as va*, which they translated as 'Sun indeed like the horse'.

But horses were unknown to the Indus civilisation, almost all scholars had long maintained, since they were not depicted among the many animals (including buffaloes) shown on its seal stones and in its art and no horse bones had been discovered by excavators; or at least no bones that convinced zooarchaeologists specialising in horse identification. The bones of the wild ass (onager) are known in the Indus valley, but not horse bones. The horse is generally thought to have arrived in north-western India only with the horse-drawn chariots of the Aryans during the mid-second millennium BC; certainly, in later Indian history armies imported their horses from outside India. Horses are, however, abundantly mentioned in the Vedic literature. If, after all, horses did feature in the Indus civilisation, was this not important evidence that the creators of the Indus



Top: seal impression on a clay tag with an elephant motif from Lothal, c.2000 BC.  
Above: 'proto-Shiva' seal impression from Mohenjo-daro of a figure in yogic posture.

## *The supposed Indus alphabet was so absurdly flexible that it could be manipulated to produce almost any translation*

inscriptions and the authors of the later Vedas were one and the same indigenous people?

Within months, *The Deciphered Indus Script* was demonstrated to be nonsense in articles for national news magazines in India written by scholars, notably Michael Witzel, a professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University, with his collaborator Steve Farmer. In 'Horseplay in Harappa', Witzel and Farmer demonstrated beyond question, even for non-specialists, that the supposed Indus alphabet was so absurdly flexible that it could be manipulated to produce almost any translation that the book's authors might desire. Furthermore, the supposed Indus Valley horse was shown, after comparison of the broken seal photograph with photographs of various similar-looking but more complete Indus seals,

to be a 'unicorn' bull of a type commonly depicted in the inscriptions. The horse image had to be a hoax created by one of the authors, an engineer with experience of computer drawing (and a taste for Hindu nationalist propaganda), as he more or less admitted under questioning by Indian journalists.

Despite this scholarly exposé, new Indian school textbooks introduced in 2002 referred to 'terracotta figurines of horses' in the 'Indus-Saraswati civilisation', and continued to do so until the fall of the Hindu nationalist BJP government in 2004, when they were withdrawn by the incoming Congress government. More important, the idea that the language of the Indus civilisation is Sanskrit and of local origin continues to enjoy wide support in India. Until such time as the Indus script is convincingly deciphered, which will not happen without major new discoveries of inscriptions, this debate about the Indus civilisation's true relationship with the later Vedic culture will surely continue.

**T**HAT SAID, the importance of the former river Saraswati, unrecognised in the 1920s, is beyond dispute. In this respect, the Indus civilisation (some archaeologists prefer 'Harappan civilisation') resembles ancient Mesopotamia, which developed between two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, rather than ancient Egypt, where civilisation was the 'gift' of a single river, the Nile. Its geographical environment was, however, more complex than either Mesopotamia's or Egypt's: a fact that influenced its evolution

more than is obvious from the evidence of its cities alone.

The city-states of Mesopotamia (ancient Greek for the land 'between two rivers') remained focused on the areas watered by these rivers. The Indus cities (or perhaps they were city-states), by contrast, exerted direct control, through both large and small settlements, over a far wider region, which supplied them with metals such as copper, semi-precious stones and minerals and timber. Beyond the alluvial plains of the Indus valley, this region may be divided into the western mountains and piedmont border zone, the mountain ranges to the north, the eastern border zone and Thar desert and peninsular India. The furthest-flung settlement, Shortugai, is on the northern border of Afghanistan with Tajikistan beside the river Oxus; it was established in order to obtain lapis lazuli from this sought-after mineral's only known mine.

THE CLIMATE OF THIS VAST AREA would mostly have been beneficial to agriculture, if we permit ourselves to judge by today's climate. Two different weather systems dominate today and sometimes overlap. In the western highlands a winter cyclonic system operates and in the peninsular regions a summer monsoon system, both of which produce rainfall. If one of these systems fails to deliver rain, the other one will almost always do so. Famine is therefore unknown in the Indus valley.

'The juxtaposition of mountains, river plains and coasts provides a unique pattern of seasonally available resources and abundant raw materials that is quite different from the situation in either Mesopotamia or Egypt', notes Mark Kenoyer, a recent excavator of Harappa. This diversity of environment, climate and materials must have been key to the civilisation's prosperity. In ancient Egypt the annual inundation ►

Bronze figure of a young dancer from Mohenjo-daro, c.2500 BC.



Terracotta figure with a headdress of flowers, rings and a belt, c.3000 BC.



of the land by the floodwaters of the Nile was the single crucial factor in agriculture; irrigation canals were vital in Egypt to extend the reach of the flood and to store water. In the Indus civilisation, by contrast, there is no evidence of large-scale irrigation. Presumably, if there happened to be a poor harvest in one Indus region, rescue was provided by another region with an abundant harvest, by transporting food via established trading networks.

**IS IT SAFE TO ASSUME** that today's Indus valley climate was the same five millennia ago? After the 1920s excavations, Marshall could not make up his mind on this question. In his chief excavation report he calls the climate of the Mohenjo-daro region 'one of the worst in India', with the temperature ranging from below freezing to some 50° Celsius, bitterly cold winds in winter, frequent dust storms in the summer and average rainfall of not more than 15 centimetres varied by occasional torrential downpours, in addition to clouds of sandflies and mosquitoes. He also notes that historians of Alexander reported

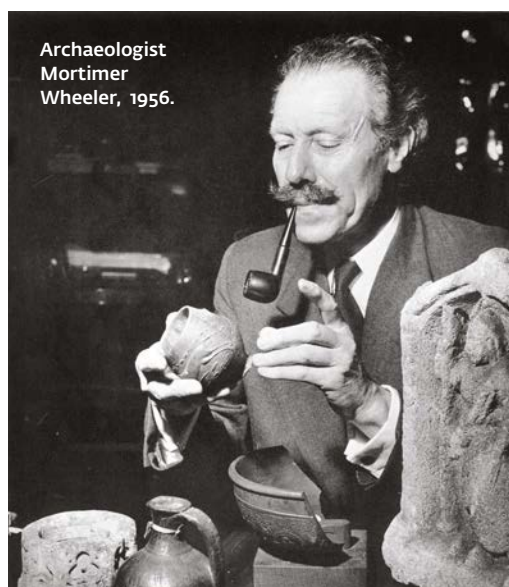
*It is fortunate indeed that the forgotten cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa were discovered in the 1920s, before they were utterly lost*

a comparable desiccation in the fourth century BC. Could this have occurred during the preceding millennium, after the Indus civilisation? As part of the evidence for possibly higher rainfall in the third millennium BC, Marshall observed that Mohenjo-daro's builders used kiln-fired, and hence more durable, bricks rather than more friable, but much cheaper, sun-dried bricks. Furthermore, some of the animals frequently depicted on the Indus seals, such as the tiger, rhinoceros and elephant, which are not found in the region today, are commonly found in damp, jungly country, unlike the lion, which prefers the dry zone and





John Marshall (fourth from right, front row), director general of the Archaeological Survey of India, with his wife, officers and staff soon after they began the excavation of Mohenjo-daro, 1925.



Archaeologist  
Mortimer  
Wheeler, 1956.

is not depicted on the seals. Yet Marshall concluded that none of his evidence was decisive. Kiln-fired bricks may simply have asserted the importance of certain excavated buildings or been a symbol of luxury, while the disappearance of the tiger from Sindh occurred as recently as the late 19th century (partly as a result of a reduction in its habitat by increased animal grazing and the effects of big-game hunting). Opinion on Indus climate change remains divided today, after several inconclusive studies. A recent one suggests there was an abrupt weakening of the summer monsoon around 2100 BC. Many scholars, however, including Kenoyer, think that temperature, rainfall and monsoon patterns have not changed much since the time of the civilisation.

Another late 19th-century change to the southern Indus valley was the gradual introduction of artificial control of the river with embankments and dams and the construction of extensive irrigation canals. These helped farmers, but not archaeologists. Within decades the over-irrigated land, including the ruins of Mohenjo-daro, now no longer washed by annual Indus floods, became impregnated with salts com-

monly known as saltpetre. The slightest rainfall would convert the anhydrous salt into the hydrous form, whitening the landscape with 'a brittle shining crust that crushes beneath the step like a satanic mockery of snow', noted archaeologist Stuart Piggott at Mohenjo-daro in the 1940s. The salination was accompanied by a more than 300 per cent increase in volume of the salt: an expansion disastrous for bricks, which caused the ruins to start crumbling into dust within a few years. At Harappa there was a parallel destruction by 19th-century railway contractors and local people in search of bricks. It is fortunate indeed that the forgotten cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa were discovered in the 1920s, before they were utterly lost.

**T**ODAY, THE INDUS SITES ARE AT RISK from international politics, too. Since 1947, the fraught border between Pakistan and India has divided the Indus civilisation, both geographically and academically. Moreover, Pakistanis do not generally regard it as a

key part of their heritage, perhaps in somewhat the same way that present-day Egyptians do not really relate to the civilisation of the ancient Egyptians. Indians, whether Hindu nationalists or not, have generally preferred to devote their attention to the Vedic culture and the subsequent epics of Hindu civilisation. Hence the following lament by Indian archaeologist Dilip Chakrabarti in his 2004 academic collection, *Indus Civilization Sites in India: New Discoveries*:

*An insignificant position in the curriculum and hopelessly disjointed writings are characteristic of the Indian academic approach to this civilisation. And yet, there ought to be a far more focused interest in this largest of Bronze Age civilisations of the third millennium BC, which is firmly rooted in the Indian subcontinent and has contributed fundamentally to the formation of India as we know it today.*

One hopes that in decades to come, new excavations in Pakistan, India and Central Asia will lead to new revelations, including new inscriptions – even, perhaps, a widely accepted decipherment of the Indus script. There are certainly fascinating problems to solve. One is drawn to the Indus civilisation's apparent success in combining artistic excellence, technological sophistication and economic vigour with social egalitarianism, political freedom and religious moderation. If further excavation and research were to show this attractive picture to be historically accurate, it might be a hopeful sign for the future of humankind.

Andrew Robinson is the author of *The Indus: Lost Civilizations* (Reaktion Books, 2015).

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# Liberty and the Common Law

England's legal system, which has since spread beyond its country of origin, resulted from an uncommon combination of centuries of input from a wide variety of sources. **Harry Potter** traces its roots and follows its branches.

**T**HE COMMON LAW of England has been compared to a broad river with many tributaries or to a tree with many deep roots and myriad branches. It is inherently conservative in a Burkean sense: its authority depends on its antiquity, on its ability to change and on popular involvement and public acceptability.

It has a long history. Perhaps surprisingly, given their 400-year occupation of what they called Britannia, the Romans seem to have left no secular legal imprint, although Roman civil law deeply influenced ecclesiastical law, which was common not just to England but throughout Europe. Nor did the native Celts leave a legal legacy. The common law sprang from a variety of continental sources that coalesced and indigenised in England. The Anglo-Saxons, who displaced the Britons, brought with them Germanic customs. The Vikings invaded whole swathes of England and imposed Danelaw. Finally, the Normans crushed and unified the country, creating – if a date can be given to a process – in the reign of the first Plantagenet, Henry II, the common law.

From Aethelbert at the turn of the sixth century, Anglo-Saxon kings became legislators. They did so under the influence of Christianity and as a result of their conquests. The most notable were Alfred the Great and Athelstan, who, while greatly expanding their kingdoms and influence, introduced sophisticated law codes, emphasised the importance of justice to a Christian king and improved legal procedures and infrastructure, most notably in the creation of borough, hundred and shire

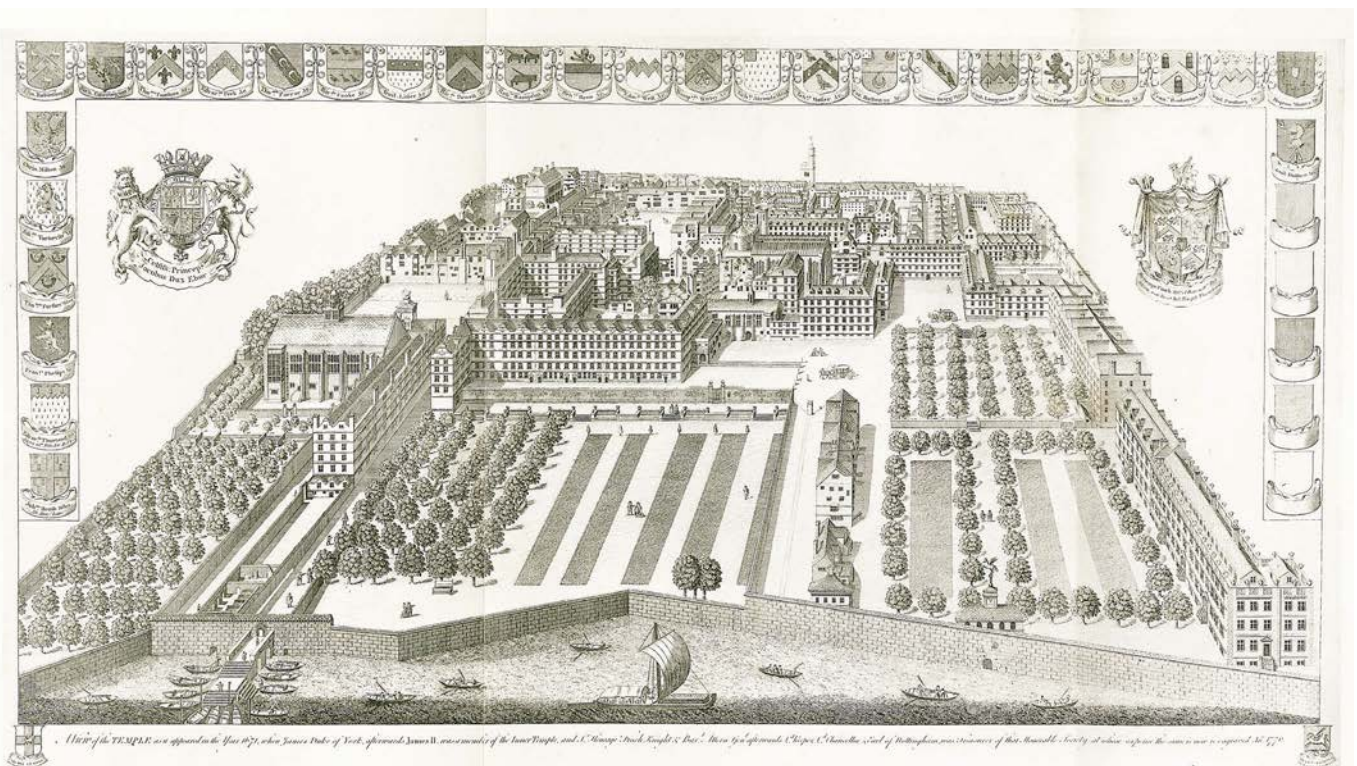


**Court of King's Bench, Westminster Hall, illustration on vellum, c.1460.**

courts. One purpose of this was to consolidate the kingdom and regularise procedures throughout. There are several references to a 'common law' in Anglo-Saxon times. The Scandinavian Cnut continued in this vein, consolidating the fusion of Anglo-Saxon and Danish customary law throughout his kingdom.

Nonetheless, despite royal attempts at rationalisation and centralisation, much remained local. Local customs and local ways of doing things persisted and the expression of justice in one part of the country was not necessarily that in another. Most important was the fact that popular involvement in justice was integral from the beginning and never lost, even as, over time, legal professionalism grew and developed and lawyers and judges took the stage. From the beginning, locals had responsibility for law and order and they played an important role in civil disputes. Local nobleman (ealdormen) and bishops presided over the courts. Local people were divided into small groups known as tithings, one of whose jobs was to detect and bring to book local miscreants. If they were not caught red-handed, but their identity was ►





known, the victim or witnesses could raise the 'hue and cry', obliging every able-bodied man to do all in his power to chase and catch the suspects. Those who successfully evaded apprehension and fled justice were declared outlaws. In a phrase of the time they 'wore the wolf's head'. They could be hunted like wolves, cornered and killed at will. While self-help such as this was utilised but regulated, feuding was restrained and vengeance was channelled into justice. When civil disputes arose or suspected criminals were apprehended, people in the locality were asked for their knowledge of land rights and customs and inheritance and about the character of those of their neighbours accused of crimes. They had to attend for what was in effect court service, often giving up days of work and travelling many miles to do so. The implementation of law and justice was a communal affair, depending on local knowledge and popular consent and participation.

**D**ESTRUCTIVE OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND as they were, the Normans did nothing to damage this local and sophisticated legal infrastructure. Domesday Book, that extraordinary and comprehensive inventory of the Conqueror's new kingdom, was compiled largely with the help of those who could provide local knowledge. As jurors (from the Latin *jurare*, to swear) they swore to speak or tell the truth (in Norman French *ver dit*, from which 'verdict' comes). This was but an acorn, but one that was to grow.

Henry II, building on his grandfather's legacy, put the administration of justice firmly under royal control. This development was largely the result of the lawlessness and chaos and corruption of 'the Anarchy' or the 'Nineteen Year Winter' of civil war between Stephen and Matilda, following the death of Henry I and before the accession of Henry Plantagenet. During this period, barons and their allies subverted the law. Henry II, by his reforms, was not depriving local people of their participation in the legal process, but over-mighty subjects of their subversion of it. Royal justices (known as justices in eyre), with all the authority of a powerful king behind them, were sent out on circuit to preside

#### The Inns of Court, London in 1671.

impartially over trials and deliver judgement and to impose some sort of uniformity throughout the kingdom. They were to officiate over and nurture the development of a common law. In later reigns these itinerant judges became assize justices, assizes being the major courts in important places to which royal justice would be brought intermittently throughout the year. Assizes were to continue until 1971, when they were replaced with permanently sitting crown courts. Royal judges soon had Westminster Hall assigned to them to hold central courts: what were to become King's Bench, Common Pleas, Exchequer and Chancery.

AT THE SAME TIME legal professionalism was growing. Four Inns of Court were established, along with subsidiary Inns of Chancery, to the east of the City of London, forming what was in effect the third university of England. Unlike Oxford and Cambridge, the Inns taught and promulgated common law, not civil law. And so by the 13th and 14th century we have a central court complex, legally trained and permanent judges, barristers thoroughly educated in the common law arguing before them and attorneys with the power to represent and act in the capacity of litigant. It was becoming all very professional and not very lay, but with one major caveat which ensured English singularity by the continuance of a fundamental role for local people: the jury.

The year 1215 is rightly celebrated as the one when untrammelled royal power was curtailed by Magna Carta and *rex* (the king) was made subject to *lex* (the law). It should be celebrated for another equally, perhaps even more, significant event: the creation of trial by jury. Up until then, how was a civil claim or criminal accusation made out? How was it proved?

For those brought to trial there was not much examination of witnesses and little testing of evidence. It was a matter of accusation and denial, with judgement made by those locals who had been summoned to attend the court: judgement based on repute. By contrast, in cases concerning land, charters, documents and local knowledge could be



Ethelbert, King of Wessex and Kent before St Augustine, early 18th-century line engraving by John Sturt after Bernard Lens II.

**Without tangible evidence how could a court ever know if an accused were guilty or innocent, unless, of course, God Himself demonstrated it?**



produced as evidence. If such were available, there may have been no need to have recourse to the two other methods of proof commonly employed: oath or ordeal. These were imposed when conciliation failed or only suspicion persisted. Both were aspects of the *judicium dei*, God's judgement. In the context of a society deeply infused with religious belief and the terrors of hell they were as an effective a means of administering justice as could be found. They were beyond dispute. They had the added advantage of joining temporal justice to the divine.

Where there was no more than neighbourhood suspicion that individuals had committed a crime, their own oath of exculpation, if they were of good repute, might suffice. In others where suspects were 'untrustworthy' they could be tested by compurgation. If they swore on oath to their innocence and found the requisite number of compurgators – or oath helpers – to swear likewise, they were acquitted. This was not a method for thwarting justice, but the reverse. The oath, indeed, was akin to a form of ordeal, but one which depended for its efficacy on delayed divine judgment. Without tangible evidence, how could a

court ever know if an accused were guilty or innocent, unless, of course, God Himself demonstrated it, either by his own direct devices or by witnesses who knew the accused swearing on oath to his good character and 'oathworthiness'. The opinion of neighbours was important both in implicating individuals and in exonerating them. Compurgation was simple but often effective. It was not easy to persuade people to risk their immortal souls by perjury, or endanger their own reputation by testifying on behalf of ne'er do wells. Christian writers repeatedly warned of the extreme 'peril' involved in swearing false oaths. Often the sworn testimony would be made upon holy relics, a mighty deterrent against false testimony. In many cases criminals could not obtain the prescribed number of compurgators. In some cases, of course, bribery, sympathy with the accused, or his outstanding character might lead to the guilty going free, but that does not undermine the general utility of this mode of proof.

SOMETIMES, especially if witnesses were reluctant to swear on oath, either because they feared feud or for their immortal souls, the proof took a physical form: the ordeal. Trial by ordeal was not peculiar to England. The custom probably originated with the Franks but was to spread throughout most of Europe. Pagan in origin, it thrived under Christianity for 400 years. It does not seem to have been a common procedure in Anglo-Saxon times, but it was a last resort when all other contemporary methods of ascertaining the truth had failed. In the code of Cnut it was applied to those untrustworthy souls who could not find compurgators. The ordeal was essential for those 'situations in which certain knowledge was impossible but uncertainty was intolerable' or 'where suspicion was considerable but guilt was not unquestionable'. It afforded the maligned a chance of redeeming themselves, though even those who passed the ordeal were still stained by the accusation: it was the medieval equivalent of the Scots' 'not proven' verdict. When deployed, it was almost exclusively in criminal cases, including murder, arson, forgery, theft and witchcraft and, predominantly, it was confined to the lower orders. Another distinction was that ►





Westminster Hall, the heart of the English legal system from the middle ages until the 19th century, portrayed in a satire of c.1730.

of all the varieties of ordeal only three regularly occurred in England: hot cauldron, hot iron and cold water. It was neither torture nor punishment, but a means of discovering the truth and of deterring crime.

**S**INCE GOD WAS intrinsic to this device, the ordeal was both sanctioned and administered by the Church. It could take place only at an episcopal see or a significant venue designated by a bishop. Because defendants were believers, only the truly innocent would choose to endure trial by ordeal with the prospect of mutilation or execution following failure, and eternal damnation for the guilty who successfully passed. Guilty defendants would likely confess, run away or settle cases instead. Those who did opt for the ordeal were in for a highly regulated and lengthy procedure and with a high chance of coming through it with success, all under the essential aegis of the Church. Then, suddenly, in 1215 this changed. The Fourth Lateran Council prohibited clerical participation in, and thus in effect abolished, trial by ordeal. Whatever the reasons, the withdrawal of the Church from this procedure was fundamental. The ordeal was killed in its prime. Without it, how do you secure a verdict in those difficult cases which were not amenable to other modes of proof?

It was a pivotal moment when English criminal procedure could have been merged with, or been submerged by, the system based on Roman precedent and created following the demise of ordeal that was to become dominant on the Continent in the 13th century. It was designed to extract confessions or other evidence – by intimidation routinely, by torture if necessary – the Inquisitorial System. It did not attempt to prove guilt or innocence but to find out the truth of the matter by the creation of a dossier of evidence, compiled by experts. Often the best source of evidence was the accused, who could either endure unremitting torture or confess. He had no way out and, unless of indomitable fortitude, no real chance of an acquittal. The use of torture was predicated on guilt and guilt was usually established. As the historian Robert Bartlett puts it: ‘Torture, a judicial procedure in human hands, was more unrelenting than the judgement of God.’ And not just ordinary human hands, but the hands of specialists employed by the state. It was predicated on the proposition that justice should be the preserve of experts. It should be professionalised. This was the rival system the common law eschewed. In common law, torture was rejected in favour of the judgement of your peers. England continued along its exceptional path which led to juries, already long deployed in civil cases, trying



criminal matters. This refusal to countenance torture has been crucial throughout the development of the English legal system right down to the present day when governments cannot be, or cannot admit to being, complicit in 'extraordinary rendition'.

The end of the ordeal proved not so much a threat to the newly forged common law, but an opportunity. The involvement of the Church – the great rival to the throne – in the secular law of the land was at a stroke removed. And the law survived this amputation. After 40 years or so of judicial experience of getting at the truth of the matter by the rational means of hearing testimony, the government of England felt confident in leaving the problem of proof to the discretion of the justices on eyre. The justices were accustomed to asking Juries of Presentment or Accusation – the Grand Jury of 12 knights – why they suspected those named in the indictments, or to empanelling a jury from those who lived in the locality and were present in court to speak to some point of fact material to the case. It was a short step to put to jurors the question of whether the suspect was guilty as charged and to bring in a verdict. The practice increased of summoning a second or Petty Jury of 12 free men to affirm or reject the view of the Grand Jury. The jury could take on the responsibility of deciding matters, leaving the judge free from 'the agonies of decision'.

**Below: a 19th-century portrayal of Anglo-Saxon trial by hot iron.**

**W**HEN HENRY III in 1219 sent out instructions to his justices to find some new means of adjudicating disputes, 'since the Church has forbidden the judgments of fire and water', within the year they had settled on jury trial. The transition from trial by ordeal to trial by jury for criminal matters was as fast as it was seamless. The last record of trial by ordeal in England was in 1219 and the first record of a criminal jury trial was in 1220 in Westminster. A woman condemned for murder, called Alice, accused five others of criminality. They submitted themselves to the judgement of their neighbours, 'putting themselves for good or ill upon a verdict'. The truthful answer given – the verdict – was that one was innocent and went free and four were guilty and went to the gallows.

Trial by jury soon became the norm. It was cheap and effective and, by making ordinary lay people central to the system of justice, it was revolutionary. It was the obverse of feuding, of people taking the law into their own hands. The jury was a regulated mob, in which private revenge was turned into public justice. The function of these early jurors was not to weigh evidence but to decide facts on the basis of their own local knowledge or the general belief of the district and they were, decreasingly, entitled to do this for centuries to come. Unlike jurors of today, they came to their task with knowledge of the case. Having

sworn an oath, they would be guilty of perjury if they gave a wrong verdict and could themselves be tried. This verdict was as decisive as it was inscrutable; it was not given individually, it did not involve giving reasons and it was not subject to question. Even so, to assuage tender consciences in criminal trials, they could bring in special verdicts, determining specific facts and leaving the legal consequences to the judge, or they could rely on benefit of clergy to mitigate the severity of the consequences of their decision.

***The transition was as fast as it was seamless. The last record of trial by ordeal in England was in 1219 and the first record of a criminal jury trial was in 1220 in Westminster***

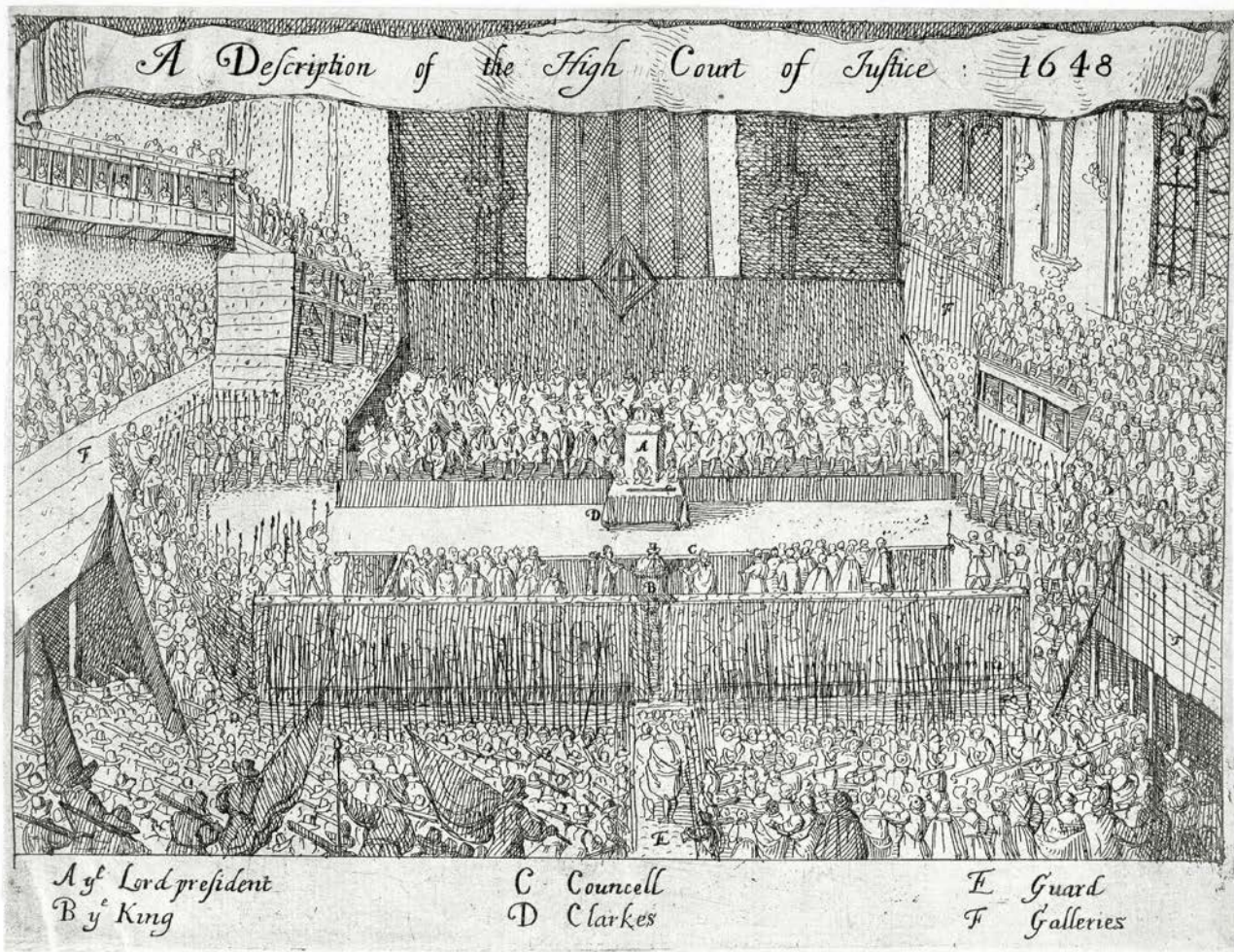
A LEGAL REVOLUTION HAD TAKEN PLACE. The decision on guilt or innocence was no longer made by God, nor did it revert to the king or agents of the state. It was the preserve and responsibility of a more mundane tribunal: the people. The offender was convicted in public by members of the public. The jury, the institution that most defines English criminal justice, begins here.

England thus took a distinctly different route from the rest of Europe. No forced inquisition, no regular recourse to torture, no coerced self-incrimination, no state control of the result. Instead it resorted to the compulsion of witnesses to secure evidence and the judgment of peers to decide the issue. It was a vastly significant distinction and it had the virtues of suppleness and adaptability as well as anonymity in numbers. By the 14th century, for instance, the rule was established that the verdict had to be unanimous and by the 15th century the distinction between law and fact, judge and jury was arising.

Thus between 1160 and 1220 the administration of English law and justice had been transformed. Juries had replaced ordeal in all criminal matters. Litigation over land was now primarily conducted in royal courts. A body of professional justices was just beginning to emerge who would administer technical, uniform legal procedures at Westminster and in the counties: rights and liberties which would be cherished by the English and others down the centuries were in embryo. The Anglo- ▶







**Trial of Charles I, Westminster Hall, 1648, contemporary engraving.**

Saxon legacy of strong local government, judicial procedures and involvement of the populace in them, coupled with the powerful Anglo-Norman monarchy culminating in Henry II, ensured that the womb of England would be fertilised. From it the English common law had been born.

HAVING BEEN BORN, it was to grow over the centuries into what exists now. Precedent became another defining feature, sometimes a straightjacket, but it was an essentially historical approach. Look to the past, seek out the wisdom of the ancestors, maintain a continuity though time as well as contiguity through place. The law fed off the fertiliser laid down in earlier times. Thus it grew, but sometimes it atrophied. Equity, administered in Chancery, arose to ensure justice when legalism might perpetrate injustice. Statute law was increasingly deployed as a speedy form of legal transformation or to deal with the pressing exigencies of the day. Royal law-making has ceased but another absolute power has taken over the task: Parliament. Equity, statute-law, common law, judicial 'interpretation' of the law were being forged into the single system that exists today.

There is a creative tension between the law's component parts. Sometimes the tension becomes confrontational, particularly when what Parliament dictates and what justice demands are at variance. Thus, in an age of anti-terrorism legislation involving the curtailment of liberty, of lengthier pre-charge detention and of frantic attempts to increase convictions for sexual offences by undermining the rights and safeguards of those accused, common law principles of justice and

fairness are deployed by the courts to interpret statutes so as to make them consonant with the demands of justice. Sometimes this amounts to emasculation. Juries, too, are entirely within their rights to bring in any verdict they may wish, however perverse that verdict may be according to the law. Judicial decency and sense of responsibility for maintaining a great tradition, coupled with the untrammelled power of the public to decide as they see fit, are the two pillars upholding justice under our legal system. What strength and continuing relevance it has depend on the vigorous maintenance of age-old liberties and high standards of impartial justice by an independent judiciary and untrammelled juries, both of which have been honed over centuries.

Harry Potter is a former fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge and the author of *Law, Liberty and the Constitution: a Brief History of the Common Law* (2015).

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# InFocus

## Dust Bowl Blues

**A** YOUNG CHILD stands by a Californian roadside in 1936 with her long sack, which she will hope to fill with the raw cotton she picks during the day. It is seven in the morning and the girl tries to keep the rising sun out of her eyes as Dorothea Lange clicks the shutter. Lange is one of the team of photographers working for the Farm Security Administration, who in the later 1930s are to take over a quarter of a million images of the 'Okies', as they are called, driven westwards out of the Dust Bowl states, primarily Oklahoma and Texas. They have been devastated by drought, farm foreclosures and repossession brought on by the Great Depression. The aim of these pictures is not so much to inform as to move us, like Lange's most famous photograph, now known as 'Migrant Mother', which has become one of the 20th century's abiding images.

The FSA was the part of President Roosevelt's Depression counter-measures, his New Deal, which was aimed at easing rural poverty. From 1935 onwards it helped poor farmers to buy their land and in particular to aid the Okie migrants streaming into California in search of labouring jobs or becoming sharecroppers. It set up relief camps there and also communities, a form of collective, where poor farmers were to be re-educated in better methods. Apart from abject poverty, it tried to counter the hostility to, and exploitation of, these incomers by Californian farmers. This was the world depicted in John Steinbeck's 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Lange and her second husband, Paul Schuster Taylor, Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, spent five years documenting it all.

The year before Roosevelt's inauguration, 1932, had been the worst: 273,000 families were evicted or saw their farms foreclosed on by the banks, themselves in desperate straits. In October it was reckoned that 34 million Americans had no income whatsoever. GDP, which had been \$104 billion in 1928 had collapsed to \$41 billion. Working on a wing and a prayer, dispelling fear with his jaunty self-assurance and unrelenting cheerfulness, in 1933 Roosevelt brought in his New Deal. He forced those who had removed gold from their banks to put it back, lifted restrictions from big business, siphoned money from some public spending, channeling it into schemes such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the FSA, as well as the Social Security Act – and building up huge debt along the way.

*In retrospect it seems the New Deal never really amounted to more than a holding operation; deficit spending could only do so much*

The impact of the Depression on the Plains states had been made much worse by the dust storms there, particularly bad after the droughts of 1934, 1936 and 1939-40. With the arrival of tractors and combines, farmers had been tempted into deep ploughing to convert the grasslands to arable and this had removed the long-rooted grasses that had trapped soil and moisture. When the rains failed and the wind got up, millions of tons of fine soil were blown eastwards and it was only after huge damage had been done that preventive methods such as contour ploughing were introduced. Of the 3.5 million people who moved out of the Plains states between 1930 and 1940 up to a third were professionals and white-collar workers, whose salaries were hard hit by the Depression and Dust Bowl, since they derived from farm incomes.

In retrospect it seems the New Deal never really amounted to more than a holding operation; deficit spending could only do so much. What really got the US economy going again was the war: to begin with, supplying the British and French and then arming the rapidly expanding US forces, both before and after Pearl Harbor. Suddenly there were millions of new factory jobs and the FSA wasn't needed any more. Maybe this girl's parents got jobs like these, while she got a decent education. However, there are photographs of black children as young as her still dragging sacks behind them in the cotton fields of the South long after she had grown up.

ROGER HUDSON







# Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Britain

**W**HAT is corruption? It is a difficult concept to define. Today, it is often equated with bribery or the abuse of public office for private gain, but historically corruption has been a much broader concept. In the period between the 16th-century Reformation and the Reform era of the early 19th century it had many different meanings, several of which have largely dropped out of modern usage. In the 16th and 17th centuries the word corruption was most often used in a religious sense to describe sin – either the Original Sin inherited from Adam and Eve, or the sin committed by people in everyday life. Similarly, the legal definition of ‘corruption of the blood’, that, when treason had been committed it was said to infect the blood of descendants – in existence since ancient times – is no longer relevant.

Yet another usage that has largely disappeared today is the notion, derived from the writings of classical antiquity, that the form or type of government could decay: monarchy corrupted into tyranny, aristocracy into oligarchy, democracy into anarchy. A variant of this way of thinking suggested that all forms of government were in a cycle of corruption: from a starting point of purity, governments became successively more corrupt until a violent purge restored them. Similarly, some talked about the corruption of the moral character of the nation. This version of corruption could also include a critique of sexual immorality, in

We may know it when we see it, but corruption is not a fixed concept. **Mark Knights** explains how 300 years of scandal have forged current perceptions of what is – and what is not – corrupt.



'A Rough Sketch of the Times', by Sir Francis Burdett, 1819.



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which corruption was often depicted as female. Taking their cue from the Italian political theorist Machiavelli, many British writers of the 17th century identified corruption as a decay of national virtue, manliness and patriotism.

Some, such as the mid 17th-century Levelers, attacked the system under which they lived: corruption in this sense was a pervasive malaise needing structural reform and a reassessment of what constituted fairness, justice and oppression. Echoes of that view can still be found. A commonly held pre-modern medical idea of corruption as the decay of the body, especially through disease, has echoes in our idea of a 'sick state' or the 'cancer of corruption'. And traces of other meanings of corruption that were common in the pre-modern period can still be found in some modern usages. The concept of a corrupted text, which has become mangled in transcription or publication (we talk about corrupt digital data), and of corrupting ideas that texts or images might have contained, still persist.

Corruption, then, has had a wide range of meanings, only some of which remain in use today. The narrowing process by which we arrive at the present understanding of the term was the result of large changes in the state and economy, which saw enormous growth in the 17th and 18th centuries. As the number of officeholders grew, so did the opportunities for corruption. The state's appetite for large-scale warfare meant much more money swilling around the system and state-backed private enterprises, such as the East India Company, made men's fortunes in the emerging Empire. By the late 18th century, reformers were determined to bear down on those who held office and to cut back on their opportunities for self-enrichment.

UNTIL THE 19TH century, corruption was not simply synonymous with bribery. Indeed the word 'bribery' seems to have come relatively late into frequent usage, popularised by the 16th-century translations of the Bible from Latin into English, which required a word for the payment given to Old Testament judges to corrupt their judgements. In terms of prosecutions, what we would now call bribery was more often proceeded against as extortion, a crime that had much older origins dating to the 13th century. Apart from electoral bribery, prosecutions for bribery do not seem to have been a routine part of the common law until the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Corruption has never been a fixed, timeless concept. Indeed, there has been a good deal of disagreement about what actually constituted corruption: the distinction between public and private interests was blurred and practices that some called corrupt were embedded in everyday social and cultural norms that many considered legitimate.

One issue that caused problems across the pre-modern period (and still does today) was gift-giving. Gifting was an

Frederick, Duke of York in bed with his mistress Mrs Mary Anne Clarke, 1809.



important part of early modern culture: creating obligations on the receiver, with expectations of some form of reciprocity. But when was a gift a bribe?

The diary of Samuel Pepys helps illustrate this ambiguity. He knew corruption when he saw it in others. His diary records his shock when Richard Cooling, the Earl of Arlington's secretary, boasted that:

*His horse was a bribe, and his boots a bribe and told us he was made up of bribes and that he makes every sort of tradesman to bribe him; and invited me home to his house to taste of his bribe-wine.*

Pepys noted that he had 'never heard so much vanity from a man in my life'.



Portrait of Samuel Pepys by John Hayls, 1666.



Despite seeming more than willing to brand other men corrupt, Pepys also recorded a number of occasions when he himself received gloves, sometimes with money inside, and other gifts from those with whom he did navy business. Pepys' wealth increased six-fold during the 1660s, the diary years, far in excess of his official salary. A hostile pamphlet, written by his own disgruntled butler, listed the many exotic gifts that Pepys and his friend William Hewer had been given:

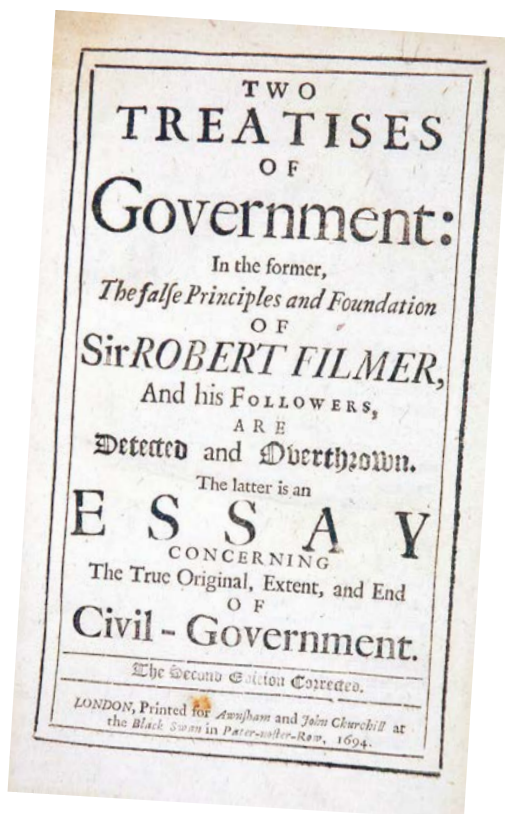
*Jars of Oyl, and Boxes of Chocolett and Chests of Greek Wines, and Chests of Syracuse Wines, and Pots of Anchovies and Quarter-Casks of old Malago, and Butts of Sherry & Westphalia hams & Bolonia Sauceges & Barrels of Pickel'd Oysters and Jars of Ollives, and Jars of Tent, & Parmosant Cheeses, & Chests of Florence Wine and Boxes of Orange Flower Water.*

PEPYS DEvised ALL SORTS of justifications to himself to prevent these mouth-watering foods from being thought of as bribes. He noted that he had never asked for any of them; that they were done in thanks for 'favours' and repeatedly refers to them as 'presents' from a 'friend'. On one occasion, when offered £200, he declared 'that as I would not by anything be bribed to be unjust in my proceedings, so I was not so squeamish as not to take people's acknowledgement where I have the good fortune by my pains to do them good and just offices'. In 1670, reviewing his conduct, he talked of 'those gratifications which both practice and the quality of my place might justify an expectation and acceptance of ... when employed in matters of lawful favour to private men'. A bribe was not a bribe when it was an 'acknowledgement' or 'gratification' for his 'pains' for 'private men'. Moreover, he claimed, he always put the public over his private interest: 'No concerns relating to my private fortune, pleasure or health did at any time (even under the terror of the Plague itself) divide me one day and night from my attendance on the business of the place', which had cost him his good eyesight.

Gift-giving and networks of friends became even more problematic in an imperial context. The growth of Empire from the 17th century onwards opened new opportunities for corrupt behaviour, challenging Britons' ethical and moral compasses. In the Caribbean, close coteries of friends created powerful factions intent on capturing embryonic state power to further their own interests. The East Indies as well as the West Indies proved an arena in which the boundaries of acceptable social and cultural practices remained fluid and ambiguous. Although in 1765 the East India Company had forbidden its servants from accepting gifts or presents, gifting appears to have been widespread. The

longest parliamentary trial in British history ran from 1787 to 1795, when Warren Hastings was accused, among other things, of enriching himself by taking gifts. The added complication was that, Hastings claimed, gift-giving in India was even more endemic than in Britain and was simply how things were done. Britain's emerging eastern Empire thus blurred the lines about which norms prevailed. Hastings' prosecutor, Edmund Burke, called them 'bribes' and sought to use the trial as a major lesson in Britain's imperial

## The growth of Empire opened new opportunities for corrupt behaviour, challenging Britons' moral compasses



Title page from edition of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, 1694.



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responsibilities, asserting that eastern ways should not corrupt western ones. Yet Hastings was acquitted, a verdict that highlighted the difficulties of defining corruption across cultures.

Social and cultural norms also shaped attitudes to public office, which was considered as much a personal as a public role. Appointment often reflected social standing and could even be bought, since an office was thought of as private property. Magistrates and other officials also had a good deal of discretion in how they exercised their powers. Power, in pre-modern Britain, was rooted in the individual as much as the state. The shift towards a rule-bound, impersonal, bureaucratic idea of office took a long time to develop, though we can chart moments when the tectonic plates were shifting.

**O**NE SUCH CASE occurred in 1783 when Charles Bembridge was accused of concealing the embezzlements, amounting to about £48,000, of a former paymaster of the army. Part of Bembridge's defence was that the paymaster had a right to take away all his accounts, because they were his 'absolute property', and also that he could not be expected to 'turn a spy' against his former boss and friend: had he done so, his lawyers claimed, 'all mankind must have hooted and hissed him'. As the prosecution put it: 'It is the excuse of a man in a public office, that he connives at public crimes because his friend commits them.' Friendship and social obligations were being pleaded as justifications for behaviour that defrauded the state.

The judge, Lord Mansfield, would have none of it and helped to clarify the boundaries of public office. He laid down a principle that 'If a man accepts an office of trust and confidence, concerning the public, he is answerable to the king for the execution of that office'. From about this time, the hitherto 'private' papers of those in government began to be deposited in official archives.

Holding office thus only very gradually evolved from something intensely personal and private towards something more impersonal and public. We can chart some of this transformation by looking at attitudes towards the sale of office. Unlike in France, where venality was a way in which the government raised money, in Britain sale of office had remained a private affair, in part because office was seen as private property. The only two statutes that were relevant, dating from 1388 and 1552, both primarily focused on offices delivering justice or handling the monarch's revenue. The first of these forbade gifts being given in return for office and also required the appointment of the most suitable and competent men. However, offices continued to be sold and, in the reformist reign of Edward VI, renewed attention to the issue produced the second Act, passed in 1552, against the sale of judicial and financial office. Its scope was very limited.

For much of the early modern period, therefore, the sale of office was in an ambiguous area between the public and



**Power, in pre-modern Britain, was rooted in the individual as much as the state. The shift towards a rule bound, impersonal, bureaucratic idea of office took a long time**

the private. Calls for action against the sale of offices were made reasonably frequently throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, but no action followed. It took a major scandal in 1809 to shift opinion, after Mary Clarke, mistress of Frederick, Duke of York, son of George III, was found to have sold commissions in the army during the Napoleonic Wars. An Act was finally passed banning the sale of office. Even then, social factors, such as patronage and connections, continued (and continue still) to play a significant part in securing government positions.

Over time, then, as a result of scandals, the boundaries

Warren Hastings offers gifts to George III, etching by William Dent, 1788.



between informal social practices and formal public ones came to be defined more clearly. Such prosecutions, together with administrative reforms, also fostered the notion and practice of accountability. But this, too, was a gradual and uneven process.

One possible means of holding officials to account was through Parliament. A mechanism of trial in Parliament, known as impeachment, was created in 1621 in order to deal with the corruption of Lord Chancellor Francis Bacon and impeachments were used quite frequently over the next century to try such cases. But because they were parliamentary trials they were often politically motivated and thus partisan affairs. Bacon was prosecuted almost as a proxy for his patron, the corrupt favourite of James I, the Duke of Buckingham, who escaped any penalty until he was assassinated in 1628 by John Felton, who had been frustrated by the lack of formal action against a man widely seen as a corrupting influence. In any case, impeachments only dealt with the most high profile or glaring of cases and were certainly not a systematic way of ensuring accountability.

A more promising parliamentary measure was to use MPs to scrutinise public expenditure. This first became routine during the civil wars of the 1640s, when the massive and unprecedented expenditure on the army had to be accounted for. Yet the system that emerged was the result of piecemeal responses to the national emergency, rather than planned, coherent oversight; and the various committees that were established to audit expenditure were themselves vulnerable to the same politicking that had bedevilled impeachments. Accusations of corruption

were frequently levelled against committee men. As one 1652 tract put it, there were 'many hundreds of those Committee-men, treasurers, and others, who have cheated the Commonwealth of many thousands of pounds'.

IT WAS WAR THAT triggered the next serious attempt to scrutinise public spending, when conflict with the Dutch in 1667 led to the creation of an Accounts Commission. But it was not until after Britain declared war on France in 1689 (a war that was to last, on and off, for much of the next 125 years and which propelled Britain into 'great power' status) that a Commission for Public Accounts really began to develop teeth. This, too, became politicised and when the Whigs gained a monopoly of power after 1715 the Commission was allowed to lapse. It was not revived until the 1780s, when it gained important new powers, not only to scrutinise public accounts, but also to recommend reforms to public administration. And so began a series of important investigations into all the departments of government, which led, ultimately, to considerable reforms. Even so, trust in Parliament as a safeguard against corruption was always uncertain when Parliament itself was seen as corrupt. The attack on electoral corruption and the franchise, a movement that dragged out over decades but which finally came to a head in 1832, was thus an essential part of the accountability narrative.

An account is both a financial statement and a narrative. An 'auditor' was, in origin, someone who literally 'heard' an account of expenditure. Holding government to account was thus a literary as well as an administrative process ►

A 1741 satire of Robert Walpole, in a carriage driven by his son, Horace. The female in the foreground represents bribery and corruption.



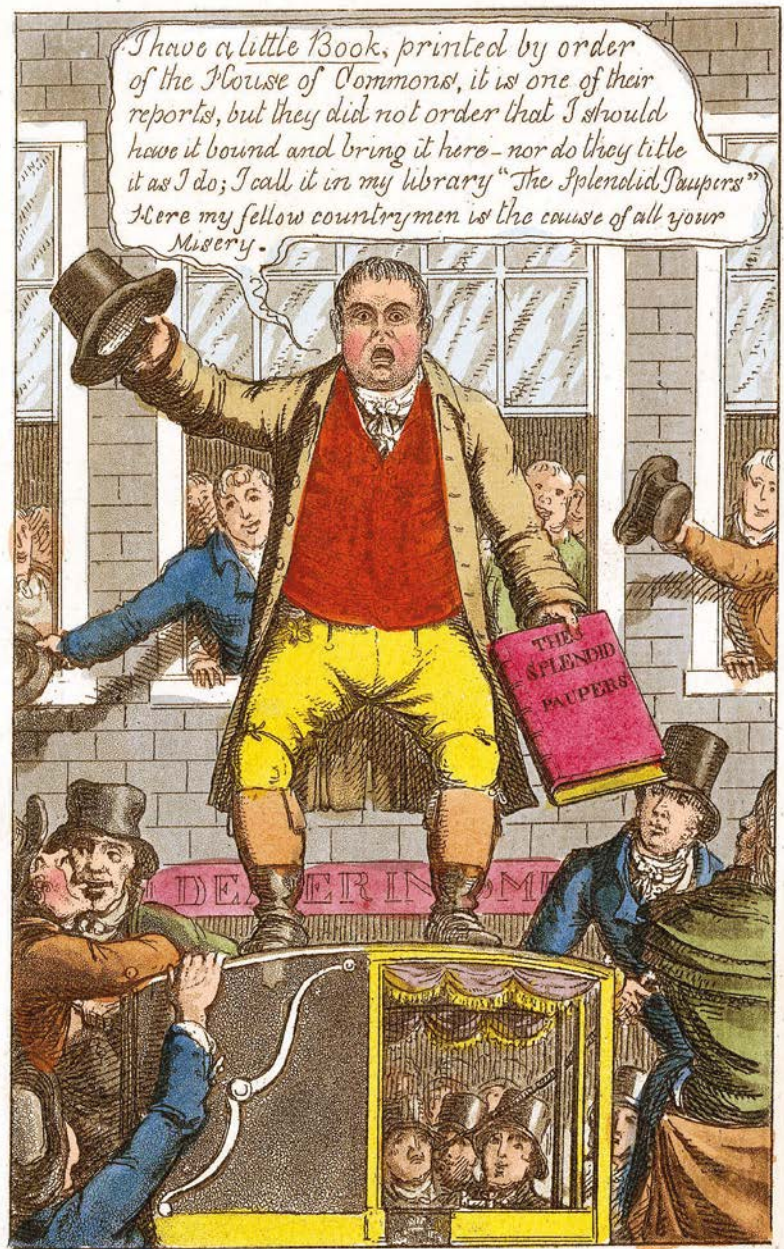


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and was closely bound up with the print revolution that began in the early 16th century and accelerated sharply after the mid 17th century. Print, by exposing corruption and enabling discussion of how to reform it, thus became an important part of the history of accountability, or what we might now call 'transparency'. Whistleblowers frequently turned to the press after finding that those in government or administration were deaf to their information. In the late 1640s, for example, Clement Walker published a number of pamphlets attacking corruption committed by parliamentary 'hucksters', taking up his pen out of a sense of conscience for which he was aware he would be punished. Walker listed the names of 100 MPs with the money, office and land that they had been given, an important early example of a genre, the 'black list', that was to be a potent weapon of the press for the next 200 years. The term 'black list' was first used in the early 17th century with various radicals producing 'black books' of shame.

INCREASINGLY, the printed revelations of whistleblowers or critics of corruption came to be linked with the right to a free press. Thus Robert Crossfield, seeking to expose corruption in naval administration during the 1690s and arrested in 1702 for his efforts, argued in a printed *Vindication* (1703) that, since every man was concerned in the preservation of the public, every man was 'at liberty to expose the actions of those who violate the Established Laws of the Land ... the press being kept open to the intent Corruption should be detected'. The link between a free press and the exposure of corruption was made even more explicitly by the anonymous author (probably Philip Francis) of the 'Junius Letters', published during the late 1760s and early 1770s, who launched scathing attacks on ministerial corruption. The preface to the collected letters in 1771 asserted that 'the liberty of the press is the Palladium of all the civil, political and religious liberties of an Englishman'. Similarly, in 1817 William Hone, who had published a series of satires against corruption, defended himself three times against government prosecutions, identifying his cause with the freedom of the press.

Strengthening notions of accountability, transparency and a free press were assisted by the development of a concept that public office was a trust that carried obligations of working for the public good rather than self-interest. The idea of trust was an old legal concept stretching back to Roman law; but it had been applied to private concerns, primarily land-holding, so that feudal law did not prevent individuals passing law down to future generations. The idea of trust as a responsibility had also been used in religious writings arguing that God entrusted individuals with free will. The shift to applying these ideas to public office came initially with Charles I's *Answer* in June 1642 to Parliament's Nineteen Propositions, as part of the public negotiation of power on the eve of the first Civil War. The king repeatedly said that God had entrusted him with regal power 'for the good of our People', that the law also entrusted certain duties to him and that other holders of 'places of Trust' were entrusted by him.



THE SPA-FIELDS HUNTER  
OR  
A PATRIOT MOUNTED.

Henry 'Orator' Hunt brandishes the 'red book', listing those living parasitically off public money, prior to the Spa Field Riots, 1816.





Lord Mansfield,  
Chief Justice of  
England, 1775.

The repeated usage of the word 'trust' immediately caught the attention of his parliamentary opponents. Henry Parker thus noted that:

*The word Trust is frequent in the Kings Papers, and therefore I conceive the King does admit that his interest in the Crowne is not absolute, or by a meere donation of the people, but in part conditionate and fiduciary.*

Parker extended the king's reasoning to argue that all authority was conditional, entrusted by the people, and that therefore the people's trust was breached when not properly performed. Trust thus implied a form of legal restraint to act in the interests of the people. This powerful idea was central to John Locke's formulation of the principles of government, published in 1690 as his *Two Treatises of Government*, and became one of the key principles underlying the holding of public office. Office-holders were now required to put the public interest before their own, otherwise they were guilty of a 'breach of trust'.

**T**HE VARIABLE, ambiguous and contested definition of corruption in the period between the Henrician Reformation and the accession of Queen Victoria helped to foster and strengthen values that are now central to how Britons perceive corruption and the measures necessary to contain it. Such values had to be worked out over a very long period of time and through a bitter series of scandals. The process took the best part of 300 years and, even then, electoral and imperial corruption remained a problem. Norms and values that now constitute part of the British psyche evolved, were learned and gradually became habits. British history, littered as it is with scandals and prosecutions, shows that such reforms and changes of culture were not easily instituted. The history of anti-corruption, then, is not so much a history of the triumph of modern ideas over old ones as it is a history of the evolution of social and cultural values in relation to the emergence of a powerful nation state, a liberal economy, an Empire and protestant morality. Anti-corruption was embedded in enormous processes of political, religious, social, economic and cultural change. It remains so today.

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Francis Bacon and the deputation of the Lords, from Cassell's *Illustrated History of England*, 19th century.

#### FURTHER READING

**Bruce Buchan** and **Lisa Hill**, *An Intellectual History of Political Corruption* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

**Philip Harling**, *The Waning of Old Corruption: The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Clarendon Press, 1996).

**Nicholas Dirks**, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Harvard University Press, 2008).





There should be no contradiction in constructing a history curriculum that incorporates both Britain's 'national memory' and its many diversities, argues **Suzannah Lipscomb**.

## An adult education

ON THE EVE of the invasion of Iraq, in July 2003, Tony Blair told the US Congress: 'There has never been a time when ... a study of history provides so little instruction for our present day.' The aftermath proved how wrong this hubristic judgment was and it is a sentiment that few in the public eye would dare to voice today.

What history should be the focus of study and how should it be taught? Readers will remember the furore around the new History curriculum in 2013 as it was devised and then, after an outcry by historians, revised by Michael Gove's team. This September, schools across the country started to teach the final iteration. This involves a new syllabus at primary school, secondary school, GCSE and A-level.

Much of the concern about the curriculum hinged on a perceived choice: that versions of history must either tell a traditional story of the great and the good, a national narrative of Whiggish heroes, or, by incorporating the histories of women and racial, religious and ethnic diversity, they will tell a politically motivated history that fragments our treatment of the past. My colleague, Oliver Ayers, reminds me that much the same discussion was had in the US in the 1990s, resulting in an all-out cultural war.

Both in the US and the UK it is and was a false dichotomy. First, there need not be anything intrinsically wrong with telling a nation's history as part of the curriculum. As Simon Schama pointed out in 2013, there is value in preserving a national memory of our 'imagined community', but the narrative cannot be uncritical. Second, it is ahistorical to suggest that these two stories can be extricated from each other. Any intellectually robust tour of British history requires consideration of the ongoing interactions between Britain and the world and

must incorporate local histories that will bring those global communications home.

The new curriculum walks the tightrope tolerably well. It is some way from the triumphal, nationalistic history of Britain that its critics feared. It has some focus on non-European societies and considers Empire, Europe and Britain's place in the world. The new GCSE, with its depth studies, thematic study and focus on an historic

***Cicero said that not to know one's past is to remain permanently a child***

site seems particularly considered and teachers I have spoken to have been enthusiastic about the new A-levels.

One serious obstacle remains. Much of the conversation about what should be taught was hampered by the fact that history is only compulsory in this country until the age of 14. This makes us one of the only – possibly the only – country in Europe where the study of history is not compulsory until 16. As a result, only 30 per cent of pupils go on to study history at Key Stage 4, that is, from 14 to 16.

As David Cannadine, Jenny Keating

and Nicola Sheldon's *The Right Kind of History* points out, this was not what Kenneth Baker intended when, as education secretary, he introduced the national curriculum. History was to be a foundation subject, studied by all throughout their schooldays. In 1991, however, Kenneth Clarke fatefully gave pupils a choice between studying history or geography from 14 and, three years later, Ron Dearing made the situation worse still by scrapping the requirement that pupils continue with each subject beyond 14.

Why does this matter? While what pupils study from 11 to 14 remains unlinked to the GCSE, repetition of material will always be a danger. There is also cramming. Even in the new curriculum, the history of Britain from 1066 to the present day has to be taught between the ages of 11 and 14. This prevents teachers from dwelling on details and ideas and allows little scope for nuanced, community-relevant retellings. Finally, the study of history has the ability to teach people how to think: as the 1963 Newsom Report on history education put it, 'to enter imaginatively into other men's minds'. If most pupils do not consider important historical issues when they are mature enough to do so, it will be hard for them to profit in this important way.

Cicero said that not to know one's past is to remain permanently a child. If we do not educate pupils about their pasts – a national history that incorporates religious, ethnic, gender and racial diversity – and do not do so with enough rigour, sufficient time and to a mature age, we leave them in intellectual infancy. What happens when they grow up and run the country?

**Bookish child:**  
*The Young Cicero Reading*, fresco by Vincenzo Foppa, c.1464.



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# The Navy and the Napoleonic Wars

Though attention this year has been focused on the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, the decisive blows that defeated Napoleon were landed at sea, says **James Davey**.

AT FIRST LIGHT on July 15th, 1815 the naval captain Frederick Lewis Maitland stood on the quarterdeck of HMS *Bellerophon* and watched a small French brig-of-war slowly approach. On any other day its appearance would have prompted him to prepare his ship for an easy capture, but today the guns stayed silent. As Maitland knew, the vessel contained a unique cargo: on board was Napoleon Bonaparte, until recently the Emperor of France and commander of its armies. One month earlier, Napoleon had fought and lost the Battle of Waterloo, after which he abdicated and retreated westwards to the port of Rochefort. Here he hoped to locate a ship to take him to America, but instead he found Maitland's *Bellerophon* blocking his escape; not for the first time, his plans were thwarted by the Royal Navy. 'Wherever wood can swim, there I am sure to find this flag of England', a despondent Napoleon commented. Desperately short of options, he decided to surrender to Captain Maitland.

Napoleon's capitulation is a fascinating and frequently overlooked coda to the Napoleonic Wars. Indeed, it was a deeply symbolic moment, for when he stepped on board *Bellerophon* the former French emperor yielded to the force that had offered the most constant and effective opposition to his mastery of the European continent. To those present, it was self-evident that the Royal Navy had played a crucial role in deciding the outcome of the war, but 200 years on, its role in the Napoleonic Wars has been overlooked, if



Capitulation: The Battle of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805, J.M.W. Turner, 1823-4.



not entirely forgotten, with the terrestrial war receiving the lion's share of scholarly and popular attention. In 2015 the bicentenary of the end of the Napoleonic Wars has been almost solely concentrated on the Battle of Waterloo, which has been marked with a wide array of commemorative events and a vast outpouring of publications that covered the battle and its legacy.

Such is the power of the anniversary to focus contemporary attention on a key event from the past, it is understandable that politicians, historians and the public alike have highlighted Napoleon's final battlefield defeat as a moment worthy of special recognition. However, this focus is problematic as it neglects one of the most important and fascinating dimensions of the war; namely, that fought on the world's oceans. This was no sideshow: indeed, the conflict at sea was a vital theatre in which Napoleon's

Spanish navies, it did not end the war at sea; if anything it grew in scale and intensity in the subsequent years. Napoleon's dominance on land meant that the war would continue and he hastily began to rebuild his fleet, prompting a series of British raids and amphibious assaults calculated to undermine his maritime ambitions. Between 1806 and 1809 the Royal Navy conducted numerous operations to ensure that his fleets were either blockading in port or destroyed. It also went to great lengths to ensure that the fleets of other nations did not fall into his hands; operations that involved naval surveillance, daring enterprises and on one occasion, at Copenhagen in 1807, the pre-emptive bombardment of a neutral city.

## Britannia rules the waves

Alongside these attacks, the navy conducted a tenacious blockade of the French Empire, while simultaneously protecting convoys of British merchant ships and attacking those of the enemy. Commerce continued to grow, creating wealth that was transformed into state revenues that not only helped to finance the war effort but also provided the vast subsidies that funded the armies of Russia, Austria and Prussia and the many coalitions against Napoleon. At the same time, the Royal Navy's blockade of Europe crippled the economy of France and its allies, bringing about the defeat of Napoleon's 'Continental System'. In some regions the navy oversaw vast smuggling operations that allowed conquered nations and vassal states around Europe to turn against Napoleonic rule and continue trading with Britain; in others, naval blockade forced Napoleon's allies to reconsider their allegiance. In 1812 economic pressure forced Russia to abandon its French alliance, prompting Napoleon's fateful march on Moscow, while two years later the navy's blockade of the North American coastline forced the hostile United States to come to terms.

Even amid the final land-based campaigns, the navy played a vital role. The navy's command of European waters allowed it to provide crucial logistical support as the coalition of nations fought to overthrow Napoleon. The Duke of Wellington, who commanded the British army's successful campaigns in Spain noted in 1813, 'If anyone wishes to know the history of this war, I will tell them that it is our maritime superiority [that] gives me the power of maintaining my army while the enemy is unable to do so.' Without the navy, the Peninsular War could not have been won.

This is not to disregard or denigrate the role of the British army or the other European military and guerrilla forces that contributed to Napoleon's defeat. However, it seems clear that the men of the navy played a vital role in ensuring allied victory. In 1803 Napoleon had entered the war with Britain confident that his dominance on land could be easily replicated at sea. By 1815, however, he was a defeated man, forced to sail into captivity within the wooden walls of a naval warship. After his long voyage, Napoleon arrived on the rocky island of St Helena, where he confided to his surgeon that the Royal Navy was 'the real force and bulwark of England'. The long years of war had given him ample reason to believe this was the case: the navy was truly his most implacable enemy and, ultimately, his captor.

**James Davey** is Curator, National Maritime Museum and author of *In Nelson's Wake: The Navy and the Napoleonic Wars* (Yale University Press, 2015).



**Bullying Napoleon:** John Bull Peeping into Brest by George Woodward, 1803.

ambitions were persistently and irretrievably crushed. From the outbreak of war in 1803 through to Napoleon's final surrender, the Royal Navy offered constant opposition to the French emperor as he strove to achieve complete dominance of continental Europe.

The navy's most important contribution was in the early years of the war, when it stood alone against the full might of Napoleonic France. For two years, a vast enemy army was camped in northern France, poised to invade Britain. The fear of invasion preoccupied public and politicians alike, but the Royal Navy thwarted all Napoleon's attempts to cross the Channel. Its unceasing blockade of France put a halt to any French sorties and ensured that Britain remained in the contest. From this, all else followed.

## Amphibious assaults

The navy also fought a series of great battles to secure and maintain British maritime supremacy, the most famous of which was undoubtedly that fought off Cape Trafalgar on October 21st, 1805. The story of this notable event is well known: the battle was a triumph for the navy, one tempered only by the death of Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson at the moment of his greatest victory. However, the battle was not as decisive as some historians might claim. While Nelson's victory was certainly a powerful blow against the French and



# COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

The First World War threw together people from all over the world. **Anna Maguire** considers representations of these chance meetings and the light they shed on a global conflict.



West Indian and Antipodean troops stack shells, Ypres, October 1917.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR is often thought of as a clash of empires. Over four million troops of colour served during the war as part of the Allied forces. The British Empire mobilised troops from India, the West Indies, South Africa, China, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Newfoundland and Africa and recruited along the moving front in Germany's imperial territories. As well as the familiar battlegrounds of Belgium and France, the war would spread throughout East and West Africa, Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia. Enlisting empires and fighting globally meant the war threw together diverse groups: combatants and non-combatants, soldiers and civilians, men and women of different nationalities and ethnicities. The move-

ments of war created fresh spaces for colonial encounters and clashes of cultures, as well as of empires.

This potential for encounters during the conflict is most immediately evident in photographs. From carefully constructed shots by commissioned war photographers to candid, personal snapshots sent home to family and friends, they show the range of contact zones and a representation of diverse groups: West Indians, Australians and New Zealanders loading ammunition together near the frontlines of the Western Front; a Maori forester engaged in conversation – language unknown – with an elderly woman in Nieppe Forest; two little children on the Greek island of Lemnos playing with an Australian and a ►



## A WORLD AT WAR

New Zealander on the plain near an army camp.

These images can be problematic. Few photographs include captions that name the people within them, regardless of their race. They also present a picture of colonial cultures through the lens of the photographer and, in the case of official collections, frequently from the imperial centre. Ministry of Information photographs show Zulu members of the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC) on a beach in France performing a traditional war dance. The SANLC was a non-combatant body formed in the midst of imperial anxiety about the mobilisation of people of colour. When the Corps was established in 1916 as the need for labour on the Western Front increased with growing casualty rates, the South African government wanted to ensure that no black men fought together with white men on equal terms. This would, it was hoped, preserve the colour bar. The men of the SANLC could only be non-combatants.

Watched by fellow South Africans and some white troops, these men performed a traditional warrior dance as part of a sports day. In a rare instance of a troop of colour being named within the IWM collections, one photograph's caption names a SANLC member: Muti, son of Ntshingwayo from the Zungu Tribe in Zululand. An encounter between members of the SANLC and British army elites could be seen as an acknowledgement of the work of the labour corps. It was an opportunity to share cultural traditions through the movements performed, the dress worn and the weapons carried. But there is something troubling in the images: the white men gathering to scrutinise the 'exotic' black men. There is a cruel irony that the men were allowed to perform warrior masculinity for entertainment in Europe, a continent in which they were not allowed to fight. They could carry traditional weapons but not use them.

**R**EVEALING THESE ENCOUNTERS is an important step towards a less Eurocentric narrative of the war, which includes those who served from the colonies and dominions of the British Empire. The diary of an Australian soldier, William Barry, speaks of the distinctive experience he had during the war: he saw service in Sri Lanka, Egypt and France and was taken prisoner during the Battle of Fromelles in July 1916. At his German POW camp, he 'palled up' with Madan Akhan, a Hindu soldier from India, and Ronald Ondatji, a 'native' from Sri Lanka. During Barry's time in Egypt, he had a remarkable encounter in a lake on the Suez Canal:

*We used to be on parade by nine am, and some days would march easy to one of the salt lakes connected by the Suez Canal, and have a swim and it was alright. One day when having a swim, two companies of troops from Jamaica came down and it looked funny to see these fine bodied coloured men, for they were as black as coal, in the water with us chaps, and it wasn't very long before we were the best of friends. Other days we would have a picnic as they called it. We would go over to one of the sweet water canals and lay under the shade of the trees, telling yarns or playing cards till evening time and then we would come back to camp.*

Barry offers a snapshot into the kind of interactions that shaped colonial

Below: a Maori lumberer talks with an elderly local woman, Nieppe Forest, March 1917.

Right: an Australian soldier and a man of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade make friends with two children on Lemnos, Greece.



***Diverse worlds and cultures became entwined. These accounts reveal individual responses to meeting new and different people and places***

military service. His diaries reveal the potential of places like prisoner of war camps or military encampments for interaction between these troops throughout the war. The intimacy of the friendship shared is noteworthy given the hierarchies of empire and race that would have dominated the encounter.

These moments of friendship across ethnic divides were not an experience exclusive to Barry. Alfred Horner, an English padre with a battalion of the British West Indies Regiment in France, detailed how his men fraternised with French civilians, 'telling them of their sunny home in broken French, which they pick up quickly, making themselves useful, and generally, by their quiet and respectful demeanour, earning for themselves the sobriquet which I have mentioned above, "the friendly (or aimables) coloured soldiers"'. At the same time, 'many happy hours were spent cementing a friendship with the British Tommy' by the West Indian men in Horner's battalion.

New Zealander Charles Beeson, too, enthused about the range of troops he was stationed with in a letter home on July 5th, 1917:

*Belgians, French, Tommies, Black chaps from the West Indies and New Zealanders are all here at this spot and all appear to get on well together.*





*Last night our boys played the French at football. It was exciting; we won by nine to three. The Maoris amused the French very much.*

John Williamson, another New Zealander, found that even hospitals were a space for encounters:

*As the four of us got seated we checked up on one another and found out that one was a Canadian, one an Aussie, one a South African and myself a New Zealander. What a coincidence that we should accidentally get at the same table after coming from places such a long way apart. We finished up by everyone swapping buttons.*

UNDERSTANDING SUCH encounters brings the experience of colonial troops to the forefront of how we engage with the First World War. Though white accounts cannot speak for the experience of troops of colour, they offer valuable insights. These encounters cannot either make up for the shortage of collected personal material, in written or oral form, but they do allow for greater inclusion. Barry's anecdote about befriending the Jamaican troops weaves an unheard story into remembered narratives of both West Indian and Australian experience of war.

These accounts also reveal how complicated cross-cultural interactions could be. The circumstances of war meant that diverse colonial worlds and cultures became entwined. They reveal individual responses to meeting new and different people in a variety of places. Raymond Danvers Baker, a New Zealander, visited a nearby Gurkha camp during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915:

*My mate and I didn't know exactly what to expect; but a 'Come in please,*

*pray be seated' in perfect English soon put us right. Inside were two big bushy whiskered Indians of evidently high rank. We were a bit overcome in the presence of such mighty ones but the chief soon made us feel at home. He squatted on the floor in the native style and spoke English without the faintest trace of accent: his companion was not quite as good. They were very anxious to know all about us and wanted to know all the news that could be got. Once or twice the principal one said 'I am afraid I do not make myself quite clear'. 'Oh that's alright, you speak English very well sir' 'Oh well', most apologetically, 'you see I have been to an English University'. We put in about half an hour most enjoyably and then walked on.*

Baker claimed not to know what to expect but finding educated men who were fluent English speakers seemed to go against his assumptions about what Gurkhas were like. An article in *The Times* from August 1915 had described how the Maori war dance, the *haka* – 'the blood curdling serenade' – intimidated their Turkish enemies at Gallipoli, fearful of stereotypes of Maori cannibals. The joke was that 'the leader of the *haka*, a full blooded Maori, wrote M.A. L.L.D after his name, and spoke better English than many a white man'. It is unfortunate that being able to speak English or having a university degree were presented as the key signifiers of being 'civilised' in these encounters, but they reveal how expectations about racial inferiority could be challenged.

ENCOUNTERS OFTEN defied the rhetoric and policy of Empire, including the racial order that it depended on. When sending black men to serve in France, the South African government and army officials aimed to segregate the men from other troops at work and in camp. War Office documents reveal how complex this was: when the SANLC were at ►







Rouen, the army removed the Cape Coloured Labour Battalion. 'The latter were treated as soldiers, the former were segregated; it would have been impossible to enforce the rules by which the South African natives were restricted to compounds if they had seen the Cape Boys alongside them allowed practically unlimited freedom.'

Yet it would prove too difficult to entirely segregate the black South African men. Stimela Jason Jingoes, who served with the SANLC, spoke in the 1970s of his experience. He described meeting William Johnstone of Folkestone, as the two worked on the docks at Dieppe, France: 'We hit it off at once and spent our breaks drinking tea and talking about our two countries, until at last we were close friends. After the war we corresponded for many years, but at last we lost touch and I do not know what became of him.' This small-scale interaction had wider implications. It subverted a hierarchy that officials had attempted to transfer from the dominion to the frontline. This was not the only such case. Thomas MacKenzie, High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, wrote in *The Times* that, 'in no instance is permission given to Maori members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force to contract marriages in this country'. New Zealand soldier William Binley told a different story:

*A Maori was engaged to an English girl and just before the wedding he was put wise to the fact that he needed a 'best man'. He got another Maori to act in that capacity and the wedding was a success. The best man took a fancy to the bridesmaid (whom he had never seen before) and within a week he was married with the previously married Maori as his best man.*

During a time of conflict and instability, these meetings and relationships broke the boundaries of the British Empire, opposing policies made to assuage anxieties about racial mixing. White people and people of colour interacted on a seemingly equal footing that disregarded both military status and regulations and their ethnic difference.

Seeing encounters as wholly harmonious, though, where military rank and racial difference were universally forgotten, would be as mis-

volunteer forces enlisting out of loyalty to the Mother Country: coercion, conscription, economic need and unemployment could and did drive enlistment.

The organisation of the military in this way would have a bearing on how the men perceived themselves and those whom they encountered. New Zealand soldier Raymond Danvers Baker thought Britain's Indian troops better than the French colonial soldiers, though they 'were pretty fearsome looking objects', as the martially superior 'Gurkhas and Sikhs left them standing'. BWIR padre Horner commented that in France:

*With the ordinary native labour corps, particularly the Chinese, our men do not agree very well. A good deal of this is probably our own lads [sic] fault, for they have I must confess a somewhat irritating habit of rubbing in the fact that, being soldiers, they are on an immeasurably higher social scale than a mere labourer who is working for a wage.*

The BWIR retained soldier status, giving them superiority over the Chinese Labour Corps and South African Native Labour Corps, as well as having more freedom to explore the cafes and bars of the French villages.

THE DEEP-SEATED racial distinctions and beliefs that led the governments and army to make decisions based on theories of martial races were reflected in the actions and behaviours of the men. Uncovering racist treatment and behaviour that emphasised colonial inequalities helps our understanding of colonial encounters. William Barry's friendship with the West Indian troops did not apply to the Egyptians near the camp. He amused himself on a train journey through Egypt by throwing small pieces of cheese and bread at the local people – 'Gyppoes' as he called them – and watching them fight over it. When in a hospital in prisoner of war camp, white South African Corporal Dotish awoke from an operation to find his ward mates were French Senegalese soldiers: 'To awaken in the morning and see two faces absolutely as black as pitch made me wonder if I had had a

## *These were not moments of imperial harmony but complicated interactions*

leading as restricting memory of the war to the experience of white troops. Friendly encounters cannot justify any jingoistic notions of the war as a time of 'Empire United', nor can or should they create a narrative of multiculturalism. Alongside sociable interactions were those that revealed racial hierarchies, both in the institutional organisation of the army and within these personal, individual interactions and explicitly racist attitudes and behaviours.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE had been reluctant to employ its black populations until the labour demands of war necessitated it and it was dependent on theories of martial races to dictate who would be allowed to fight and where. Inequality was intrinsic to the British Empire's organisation of war. The white dominion forces of Australia, New Zealand and Canada were combatant soldiers where their colonial counterparts from China or Egypt were not. Indian men were soldiers and could fight on the Western Front; West Indian men were soldiers by name but could only participate in combat outside Europe; black South Africans were labourers only. Not only that, but the colonial troops were not exclusively

nightmare in the night. I nicknamed one Smiling Sambo and the other Dusky Joe.' The use of racist terminology throughout descriptions of arriving in new lands and meeting new peoples – 'coolies', 'coloured' or 'natives' – exposes how pervasive racial prejudice and resultant abuse was at this time.

While enlistment was not necessarily proof of duty and loyalty to the so-called 'imperial cause', having contact with Britain was significant for colonial troops. For many of the white dominion troops, Britain was familiar; it was 'home'. In a letter to *The Times* on April 18th, 1917, a 'New Zealander' wrote nostalgically of, 'the rolling downs, and the chessboard fields, and the fat cattle that are not all gone yet. A country Sunday stands for England'. His compatriot Alfred Olsson wrote home that London was 'the world's greatest city'. 'What I consider the most magnificent building I have ever seen is St Paul's Cathedral which contains the remains of so many of England's most famous dead.'

This attitude was deeply ingrained in other colonial societies. Horner described the awestruck reaction of West Indian men and how overwhelmed they were to arrive: 'Here at last was England, that this was their first view of that wonderful "Mother-land" of which they had heard and read ever since they had been children, that great mother, whose children they were, whose flag they served under, and whose quarrel they had in loyalty made their own.' Though Horner may have projected his own British identity onto the men, he also showed how prominent imperial rhetoric was in the colonies. In a similar way, Jingoes of the SANLC reflected on his own arrival into Liverpool: 'It was, for me, as if all my geography lessons at school were coming alive ... I had ►

Top: Muti, son of Ntshingwayo of the Zungu Tribe, Zululand, being presented to General Maxwell after performing a 'Zulu war dance', Dannes, June 24th, 1917.  
Bottom: Soldiers of the South African Native Labour Corps perform a 'Zulu war dance' on the same day.





New Zealand troops march through London c.1919.

learned at school that England is a beautiful place, and I was pleased to find that my teachers had been right.’

This was not universal though and alongside the pleasure expressed from visiting Britain were moments of disconnect and disillusionment. This could be as slight as not being enchanted by the imperial metropolis; for New Zealander E.M. Ryburn, London’s sights lost ‘a lot of their romantic interest, I think you could call it, by seeming to fit so naturally into their surroundings. I found this strike me with regards to all the so-called “sights”’. When Ryburn sought out a piece of New Zealand in the small exhibitions of the Imperial Institute ‘there was any amount of interest in what was there and we filled in the morning’. Being able to sightsee in London, despite its imperial significance, was small compensation for the continuing hardships of military service, an imminent return to the front and the absence of home and family.

More significant though were occasions of discomfort and condemnation of witnessing the racial inequality of the British Empire. In Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka) Private Gray, a New Zealander, saw something of what he termed the ‘domination’ of the white man. A Sinhalese man had come to the camp to collect letters to post, left after the soldiers had moved on to escape the censor. ‘He had taken money to pay for the stamps and as a small commission, and was getting a big bundle, when a barracks man spotted him, grabbed the mail, took every cent the man had and sent him off with a kick.’ Gray himself criticised the deception that ‘seems to be the one national characteristic’ of the Sinhalese

people. But the response was disproportionate and out of line with Gray’s sense of ‘British justice and fair play.’ War exposed the distance between the imperial rhetoric of benevolence and ‘fair play’ from reality.

These encounters highlight the consequences of the global First World War, where empires mobilised troops from across the world. These were not moments of imperial harmony in a time of global turbulence, but complicated confrontations with different, unknown or preconceived people and the reality of the British Empire’s operation. Remembering such encounters presents us with a more inclusive understanding of the war, ensuring that we consider the experience of peoples from the colonies and their multi-faceted military service.

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# *The Siege of Rochester*

The struggle between King John and his barons turned into open warfare at Rochester Castle in 1215. Yet the story of how the fortress came to be besieged has not been fully understood, says **Marc Morris**.

WITH ALL THE FUSS being made this year about Magna Carta and its legacy, it is easy to forget that, in its original incarnation, the document sealed by King John at Runnymede was a dismal failure. Intended to heal the rift between the king and his barons, it succeeded in keeping the peace for just a few weeks. A month after it had been issued, both

sides were accusing each other of failing to observe its terms and preparing for a renewal of hostilities, which began in the autumn of 1215.

The first action in that war was the siege of Rochester Castle in Kent. One of the most impressive of all medieval fortresses, Rochester's great tower, built from 1127 and still standing today, soars to a height of 125ft. In the reign of King John it was the tallest secular building in Europe. The castle was occupied by rebels, but was soon surrounded by the king and a massive mercenary army. For seven weeks it was bombarded by missiles hurled by the king's trebuchets, but eventually fell due the operations of his miners, who tunnelled





Besieged:  
Rochester 1215,  
illustration by  
John Cann.

under one corner of the tower and caused a large section of it to collapse. The defenders, reduced by hunger to eating their expensive warhorses, were soon forced to surrender. 'Living memory does not recall,' said a contemporary chronicler, 'a siege so fiercely pressed and so staunchly resisted.'

Because of its importance and its spectacular conclusion, the siege has attracted a good deal of attention over the years. It has been the subject of scholarly articles, television documentaries and even a rock-opera written by Rick Wakeman, performed in the castle grounds in 1991. Most recently it has been the subject of a feature film, *Ironclad* (2011), high on violence but low on historical accuracy ('Heavy metal goes medieval' was its arresting strapline).

### Revised assessment

Yet the story of how Rochester came to be besieged in the first place has not been properly understood. A neglected account by a contemporary chronicler suggests that existing narratives of events leading up to the attack on the castle require revision and that the struggle in the autumn of 1215 was a good deal more complicated than previously supposed. A revised assessment of the evidence also casts the actions of some of the principal players in a new light. In particular, it raises questions about the role of the archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton, who had custody of the castle up

## *The barons' plan, now that Magna Carta was a dead letter, was a more conventional one: replace John with someone else*

to the point it was occupied by the rebels.

In the struggle between King John and his barons, south-east England was the crucial theatre. The barons had scored a coup in May 1215 by seizing London, a move that had forced John to negotiate at Runnymede. Once Magna Carta had failed, both sides began looking for military support from the Continent. Under the terms of the charter, John had been obliged to dismiss his foreign mercenaries at the start of the year, but in August he secretly dispatched his agents across the Channel to find new recruits, who were instructed to meet him at Dover at the end of September.

The barons were also seeking support from overseas. Their plan, now that Magna Carta was a dead letter, was a more conventional one: replace John with someone else. They offered the English crown to Louis, son of the French king, Philip Augustus. At 28 years old, Louis had plenty of military experience and could call upon the resources that would be necessary to beat John in an armed struggle.

With the king at Dover (he arrived there at the start of September) and the rebels in London, the focus fell on Rochester, which lies halfway between the two. Originally a Roman city, Rochester sits on the ancient road known as Watling Street at the point where it crosses Kent's largest river, the Medway. Its castle had been founded soon after the Norman Conquest to dominate the city and to control the bridge that carried the road across the river. In 1215 the rebels were anxious to control the line of the Medway in

order to forestall the king's advance on the capital.

In trying to understand what happened in the autumn of 1215, we have one reliable source: John's letters. From the start of his reign, the king's writing office, or chancery, kept copies of his writs and charters by enrolling them. Most of these rolls have survived and are kept in the National Archives at Kew. Because the king's letters are place-dated (e.g. 'Windsor, 12 March 1207'), we can be certain of his whereabouts from one day to the next. John is the first English ruler for whom we can reconstruct a reliable itinerary.

For the barons, we have no comparable archive. Occasionally an odd letter or charter may help to locate a baronial leader on a particular date, but our knowledge of the king's opponents depends mainly on the reports of contemporary chroniclers. Such writers (mostly, but not always, monks) vary in accuracy according to the quality of their sources.

The conventional narrative of how the siege began is scrambled in the second week of October. According to a chronicler called Roger of Wendover, the barons in London, seeking to prevent John from attacking the capital, decided to seize Rochester and sent for a man called William d'Aubigny, one of 25 barons responsible for the enforcement of Magna Carta. He and his men came to London and then advanced to Rochester, which they successfully occupied.

Just two days later, having heard of the castle's seizure, John arrived outside the gates and began to besiege it. Since the king's letters show that he arrived at Rochester on 13th October, it follows that d'Aubigny must have taken possession of the castle on 11th October.

But Wendover, it seems, has given us only a partial and misleading version of the story. A much fuller account of the build-up to the siege is found in the chronicle of a writer known today as the Anonymous of Béthune. For a long time neglected by English historians, perhaps because he was writing in Flanders, the Anonymous is in fact supremely well-informed. He composed his chronicle for a Flemish nobleman called Robert of Béthune, who was one of the foreign knights who fought on John's side at the end of his reign and therefore intimately acquainted with the king's movements and actions.

### Fixing the dates

The Anonymous begins by explaining how some Flemish troops came to Dover as requested, but discovered on arrival that John had moved inland to Canterbury. The king's letters show that he did so on 19th or 20th September. The reason for this move, says the Anonymous, was that the king had learned that the rebels had left London and occupied Rochester. The rebels, in other words, had taken the castle almost a month earlier than Wendover had led us to suppose.

Everything that the Anonymous goes on to say reinforces this dating. He describes how John fortified Canterbury against attack, but then heard that the rebels were just ten miles away and fled back to Dover. The king's itinerary shows that he did briefly return to Dover on September 22nd. When he subsequently learned that the rebels had withdrawn to Rochester, says the Anonymous, John recovered his courage, returned to Canterbury and then travelled to an unidentified place called 'Antonne'. Again, the king's letters show that he did indeed travel beyond Canterbury ▶



in the last days of September, moving 35 miles west to arrive at Malling by the end of the month. While at Antonne, Anonymous says, John received the news that many of his Flemish troops had been shipwrecked and drowned in a storm on September 26th, a date confirmed by other sources. Some Flemings, however, caught up with the king at this point and their arrival raised his spirits. He returned to Canterbury to take their homages, says the Anonymous, and John's itinerary shows that once again the chronicler is correct: the king was back at Canterbury on October 5th. Four days later he set out towards Rochester, to arrive outside its walls on October 13th.

The match between the Anonymous' description of John's movements and the king's recorded itinerary shows the chronicler must have been right to claim that the rebels had occupied Rochester in mid-September. But who had occupied it? The Anonymous supposed it was William d'Aubigny, who held it for the duration of the subsequent siege, but a likelier answer is provided by another chronicler, Ralph of Coggeshall. Coggeshall explains how the castle

## The occupation of Rochester makes sense of the chronicle accounts and restores the military reputation of fitz Walter

was secretly entered by the leader of the barons, Robert fitz Walter, self-proclaimed 'Marshal of the Army of God'. He goes on to explain how, having occupied Rochester, fitz Walter beat off an attack by the king's forces, who were attempting to isolate the castle by destroying the bridge across the Medway. As it is clear from the other accounts that D'Aubigny held the castle for the duration of the siege, historians have puzzled over Coggeshall's description of fitz Walter's involvement, even to the extent of dismissing it altogether.

### Mysterious journey

Once we realise that the castle was occupied in mid-September rather than mid-October, as the Anonymous describes, Coggeshall's testimony becomes credible. It would explain why King John ordered the seizure of fitz Walter's lands on September 17th. It also explains the king's mysterious journey from Canterbury to west Kent at the end of the month. In travelling to Malling, John had crossed the North Downs and moved to the upper reaches of the Medway. He had crossed the river, perhaps fording it at nearby Aylesford, for Malling lies a mile or so from the river's western bank. This was almost certainly the moment at which John's forces launched the attack on Rochester Bridge described by Coggeshall, who says that they approached from the London (i.e. western) side of the river. Their plan was to burn the bridge down, but fitz Walter and his men extinguished flames and forced the king's men to flee, killing or wounding many of them as they fled.

At what point, then, did fitz Walter leave the castle and switch places with William d'Aubigny? It seems likely that Roger of Wendover was probably right that this happened on October 11th, just two days before John's arrival, for on this point he was well-informed: Wendover was head of Belvoir Priory in Leicestershire and D'Aubigny was lord of

Belvoir Castle. The chronicler, it is clear, is telling D'Aubigny's version of the story. It therefore comes as no surprise that Wendover fails to mention that fitz Walter had already held Rochester for three weeks and foiled an attempt by John's forces to destroy its bridge. D'Aubigny was greatly embittered against fitz Walter and the other baronial leaders because, once the siege was underway, they failed to ride to his aid (despite having sworn on the gospels that they would do so, according to Wendover). In D'Aubigny's version of events there was no room for anything that would reflect well on Robert fitz Walter.

### Reputation restored

The occupation of Rochester in mid-September thus makes sense of all the chronicle accounts and partially restores the tarnished military reputation of Robert fitz Walter. It also raises questions about the culpability of Archbishop Langton. The archbishops of Canterbury had controlled Rochester since the early 12th century on the understanding that it would be surrendered to the king if necessary. In 1215 John made two attempts to persuade Langton to hand the castle over, first in May and again in August, but on both occasions his request was refused. Coggeshall makes it clear that there was much heated argument about Canterbury's rights versus those of the king, but only Roger of Wendover makes the allegation that Langton was directly involved in the castle's surrender to the rebels, adding 'God knows why'. Historians have been quick to point out that Wendover must be in error, for the archbishop left England for Rome in mid-September, three weeks before the date given by Wendover himself for D'Aubigny's arrival at Rochester on October 11th.

But since we now know that the castle had been occupied by Robert fitz Walter almost a month earlier, this puts Langton very much back in the frame. Did the archbishop, as his parting shot before leaving for the Continent, secretly abandon his long preserved neutrality and instruct Rochester's keeper to admit the rebels? Wendover apart, the other chroniclers were more circumspect, reporting that the king was angry at Langton because of his failure to surrender the castle to royal agents. John himself, lacking any clinching evidence of the archbishop's complicity, had to stick to the same line. In a letter to his justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, written soon after Rochester's fall, the king described Langton as 'a notorious and bare-faced traitor, since he did not render up our castle of Rochester to us in our great need'.

Yet the king clearly believed that Langton's sin was not simply one of omission. 'Inquire with care from your prisoners', he ordered Hubert, referring to Rochester's captured rebel garrison, 'whether they acted on the archbishop's advice, and have a diligent inquiry made to see if you can find the letters that he sent to the barons and others at the time of the rebellion against us.' John was a notoriously suspicious man, inclined to believe the worst of everyone and quick to see treachery and conspiracy around every corner. But a better understanding of the seizure of Rochester Castle in 1215 suggests that on this occasion, his suspicions may not have been entirely without foundation.

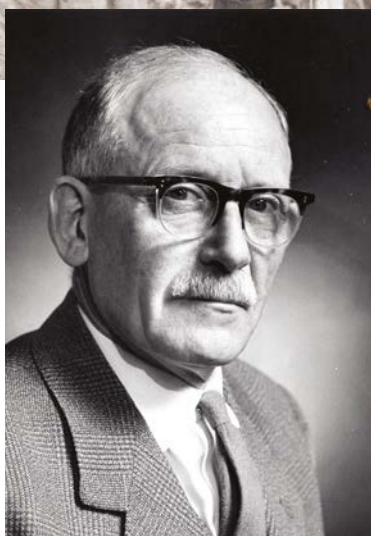
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Seconded to central Africa following the outbreak of the Second World War, John Cadbury became a master of logistics in one of the world's toughest environments, as **David Birmingham** reveals.



**H**OW MANY BOXES of matches did Congo need to import in 1942 to satisfy rubber collectors who had no local match factory? That was one of the calculations that John Cadbury had to make, on behalf of Sir William Palmer of the British Ministry of Supply, when he arrived in Léopoldville (now Kinshasa) in late June. When the western Allies lost their Malaysian rubber estates, the Ministry of Supply recalled that, early in the 20th century, Congo had once supplied Europe with rubber. To reactivate the supply it became necessary to calculate what matches and other imported necessities would be required by producers. Many matches were used to light cigarettes, which also had to be imported, if local morale was to be maintained in the face of wartime austerity. Cadbury estimated that scarce shipping space would have to be reserved for 1,000 tons of cigarettes each year. Most of the Congolese population of 11 million cooked on charcoal and so would need matches to light the family brazier. Much domestic lighting in Africa was produced by candles ▶

# Cadbury's Congo Mission

Above: Men and women carrying raw rubber, Congo, 1943. Inset: John Cadbury in later life, May 1964.



## CONGO

and so Cadbury also had to assess how many candles Congo would need to import. As Cadbury watched the bouncy little Italian apostolic delegate, in his papal skull cap, bobbing about at a diplomatic garden party, he realised that the Catholic Church would need a plentiful supply of candles. The 30,000 white Congo residents, a tenth of whom lived in Léopoldville, used lanterns when electric power failed and these, together with the necessary supply of kerosene, would have to be factored into Cadbury's assessment of wartime needs.

The white population was, furthermore, increasing with the arrival of refugees from ships torpedoed in the Atlantic. Another problem arose over whether to include in the import estimates the American troops, possibly numbering thousands, being newly deployed in Congo. It was also noted that high-living Belgian colonials enjoyed strikingly different standards of consumption from those expected by the Greek and Portuguese half of the European population, whose needs were closer to those of urban Africans. These petty shopkeepers and bar-owners used kerosene and matches for refrigerators as well as for hurricane lamps.

Cadbury had to work late into the night to do the necessary sums, practising his own typing in the absence of any diplomatic clerical staff and using a typewriter borrowed from the American consulate. His conclusion would seem to have been that he would have to find over a hundred tons of shipping space to import matches, as well as space for the 300 other manufactured items deemed essential and not locally available. He hoped that the demand for matches might be at least partially met by supplies either from neutral Portugal via Angola or from British India, but he apparently assumed that any shortfall would have to be met ultimately from England, perhaps with 'England's Glory' matches from Gloucester, or Bryant and May safety matches from Stepney in East London.

**J**OHAN CADBURY was 34 years old when war broke out and his father's chocolate business seconded him to the British Ministry of Food. The requirement to calculate the needs of the Belgian Congo – and also of the French Congo and its equatorial hinterland – was made urgent by two key turning points in the war. The first was the fall of Malaya to the Japanese in 1941 and the subsequent loss of Britain's South-East Asian rubber plantations. The second was the Japanese pre-emptive attack on Pearl Harbor, which caused Hitler to declare war on the United States and so brought the Americans into the Second World War.

The loss of Asian rubber supplies caused the allies to search for African supplies, such as those which had, notoriously, dominated the market 40 years earlier. When Germany began targeting American shipping in the

African troops guard a bust of King Leopold, Belgian Congo, September 3rd, 1942.



A canoe meets a flying boat at Léopoldville, 1940s.

Atlantic, this seriously disrupted the supply of US consumer imports into Congo. Belgium had fallen to a German invasion in May 1940 and Congo merchants had switched from Antwerp to New York for their supplies. Initially Congo had exported raw materials for dollars at twice the value of imported manufactures. There had been little disruption of supplies and when Cadbury arrived he was astonished at the number of brand new American motor cars on the streets of Léopoldville.

Cadbury had set out on his economic mission in a tiny flying boat, which refuelled first in a harbour of southern Ireland, where the half-dozen passengers were astonished





The vast territory covered by the Congo at the time of the Second World War.

by the ready supply of real butter. A night flight, avoiding the Vichy anti-aircraft batteries in French Africa, brought the craft to the River Gambia at first light on its way to Freetown and Lagos. Refuelling at Libreville was done by hand, pumping drums of petrol into the tanks from a canoe, before the last hop brought them to Stanley Pool, which separated the two Congolese capitals of Free French Brazzaville and Belgian Léopoldville. There, Cadbury met his opposite number, a middle-aged American diplomat called Sam Day. They were not welcomed by the Belgians, who feared any interference in their economic autonomy or threat to their political status.

The hierarchy of obstruction began in the office of the Belgian Prime Minister, Hubert Pierlot, who, Cadbury claimed, came on a visit to Congo from exile in London and caused much bureaucratic disruption. Hostility was reinforced by the British Minister for Colonies, who spent some time in Africa. The most immediate handicap was presented by the Governor-General's department of economic affairs, which withheld key commercial statistics from the Anglo-American mission for weeks on end. Cadbury, the cautious amateur diplomat, was initially careful in what he said even in the most strictly confidential of memoranda, but once he had crossed the river into French Congo his private letters to his family allowed him to unleash his frustrations. In the territories of French Equatorial Africa the local people were delighted to welcome a visitor and laid on astonishingly elaborate meals, despite the wartime conditions. The exception to this welcome came from a few pro-Vichy settlers, who were dismayed by news that US troops had landed in North Africa and were heading towards Algiers. As a source of strategic war materials, particularly

rubber, French Congo and its satellites all the way up to Cameroun were no match for the potential offered by Belgian Congo.

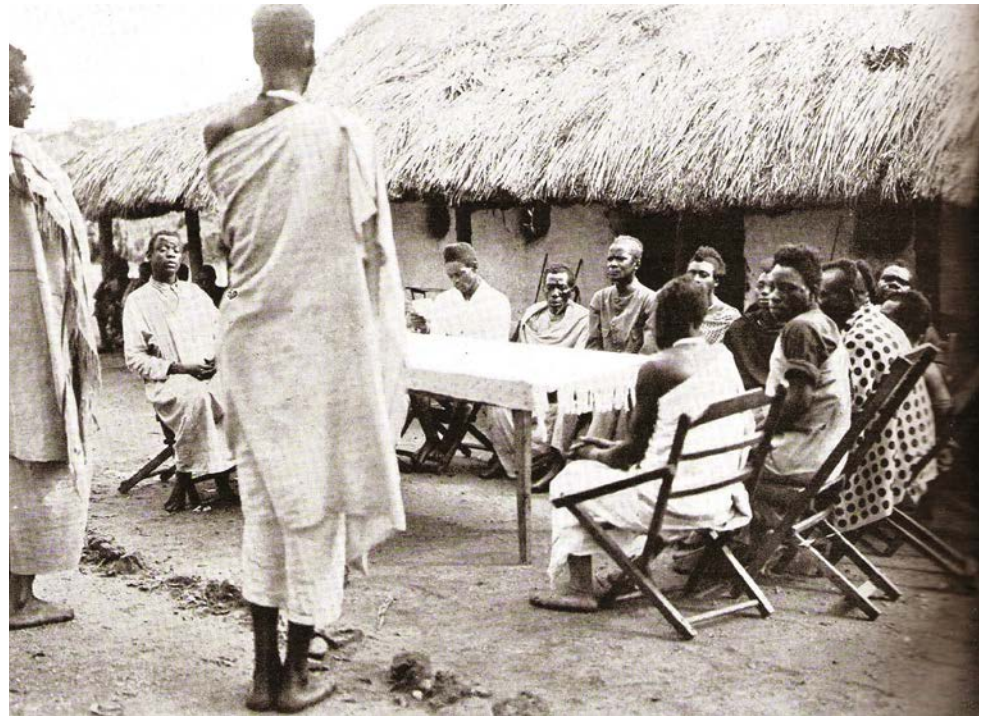
The delicacy of the Cadbury-Day mission was two-fold. First, it had to ensure that enough attractive manufactured goods were available at affordable prices to give an incentive to Africans to go out into the bush and harvest wild rubber. If there was nothing appealing to buy in the shops, then any economically shrewd Congolese would revert to subsistence production rather than market production. At the other end of the scale the standard of living of the expatriate population had to be maintained at a viable level despite wartime hardships in Europe. Although Belgian missionaries had long adapted to a lifestyle based on local African food supplies, Belgian civil servants and commercial agents expected to eat and drink as they had always done, in high colonial style. The economic mission therefore authorised the importation of astonishing quantities of butter and cheese, though it hoped that half this supply might come from South Africa and so not take up North Atlantic shipping space. The mission's balancing act had to calculate not only how many matchsticks might be needed in Congo, but how to maintain colonial morale and assess the practicalities of distributing food, drink, clothing and all other consumer goods.

**T**RANSPORT WAS A VITAL and complex part of this task. At the lowest end came the bicycle, of which 5,000 new lightweight English bikes were deemed necessary to supplement the 50,000 already in service. The sandy tracks and thorny paths were hard on tyres and so, in spite of the loss of Asian rubber supplies, an order for 180,000 bicycle inner tubes was authorised for delivery in 1943. The next item of transport thought essential for efficient mobility on rudimentary rural roads

was a small, English, 350cc motorcycle, judged preferable to a heavy American Harley-Davidson. A sidecar for a third passenger, or for freight as was common in Europe, was not deemed suitable for Congo's twin-rutted trails. The motor-bikes also required a plentiful supply of rubber tyres and inner tubes. A motor car, which an expatriate aspired to own in the absence of buses, was only really useful in town, where short stretches of asphalt had been laid. During a road trip along the stony highway west of the city, Cadbury only met four other cars over the course of three days. The life of a vehicle, often driven by an inexperienced chauffeur

who understood little of maintenance, was estimated to be as short as 40,000 miles under Congolese conditions. Cheap replacement vehicles and spare parts for simple cars were essential, but the Cadbury formula banned the import of status cars, much to the dismay of proud Belgians. The local administration was forever trying to maximise its assessment of import requirements, rather than to estimate the minimum of essentials required from overstretched British suppliers. A request for 1,350 new cars was cut back to 400. Cadbury and Day halved or eliminated entirely many other import quantities desired by the Congo economic department.

## *Cadbury, the cautious amateur diplomat, was careful in what he said, even in the most strictly confidential of memoranda*



Clockwise from top:  
a chief administering  
justice; the port of  
Matadi, c.1940; a view  
of Léopoldville, 1940s.



Lorries played an important role in transport politics. Despite the rudimentary state of the roads, a fleet of 350 lorries was sent all the way up to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to supply allied troops fighting Mussolini's occupying Italians. Many of these vehicles broke down along the way, but 250 struggled back to Congo in need of repair parts from America. Another requirement was for lorries equipped with desert-quality tyres, which were expected to trail up through French Equatorial Africa to Lake Chad and then cross the Sahara to supply allied troops in Egypt and later in Libya, since the Mediterranean sea routes were under heavy attack. All these lorries were tiny by postwar standards and anything over three tons would not have safely crossed narrow bridges or rudimentary pontoons. Three-ton trucks were supplemented for local work by one-and-a-half ton pick-up vehicles made by Ford and Chevrolet. An order

for 2,000 trucks was approved but it seems to have been assumed that wooden bodies would be built onto imported chassis when they arrived. Keeping all these disparate vehicles on the road was a nightmare requiring at least a dozen sizes of tyre, not to mention 27,000 tons of petrol. The Anglo-American mission cut back the annual petrol allocation from a requested 40,000 tons, though it recognised that additional petrol imports, from a Dutch refinery on the Caribbean island of Aruba, might be needed to cover either French Congo or American military requirements.

Heavy traffic was carried by a railway, which hauled all imports for western Congo up from the ocean port of Matadi across a 3,000ft plateau. A parallel Congo-Ocean railway was also run by the French between Brazzaville and the sea. The train required a supply of good quality coal; coal from Nigeria was unsuitable for Belgian steam engines.



Eastern Congo obtained some coal from Southern Rhodesia but sending it to Léopoldville would have involved multiple trans-shipments from rail to barge and back along a river route interrupted by several sets of rapids. During the war the Katanga railways in the east of the country sometimes used wood as fuel, but in western Congo it was believed that the flying sparks from wood-fired engines would be too dangerous with freight that included ammunition. Coal consumption had to be carefully measured by the British chocolate manufacturer and his American colleague. The railway terminus was on the Léopoldville quayside, where tugs with strings of barges took over from the train. The economic assessors had to estimate how much lubricant would be needed to keep the Congo river-traffic flowing with wood-fired steam tugs. When watching the flurry of

## ***One of Cadbury's excursions was to Thysville, which had a major sugar plantation and a refinery that might have been encouraged to expand production***



port activity, Cadbury was fascinated to see that the tugs were captained by expatriate skippers, who travelled up and down the river with their wives and children on board, rather like canal barges.

Travel by rail, road or river was always unreliable in Congo and by the 1940s the country had become partially dependent on small aeroplanes. The Belgian national airline, Sabena, owned four American Lockheeds, seven German Junkers and seven Dutch Fokkers. Cadbury agreed that a request for six twin-engine American Dakotas be approved to increase the fleet. As in the case of lorries, consideration was given to the supply of fuel and especially

to stocks of spare parts without which planes might wait grounded for three months at a time. Air travel, however, was precarious. When Cadbury crossed the river to Brazzaville he was able to hitch a ride to Lake Chad, wedged in the rear gun-turret of a Blenheim bomber with a broken window. He did not accept the return flight, on which the pilot and navigator were both killed when their poorly serviced plane crashed. Cadbury hitch-hiked down to the Cameroun coast looking for possible supplies of rubber and admiring the stands of cocoa trees bearing a crop with which he was familiar. He eventually got back to Léopoldville, where he was presented with the document that the department of economic affairs had reluctantly prepared for him. On receiving the list Cadbury radically annotated it with his own recommendations and then, as 'the fat began to fly', he posted copies to London and Washington by diplomatic courier and escaped via Katanga and Kenya to his next assignment in Madagascar, a colony which, like French Congo, had sided with Britain rather than with the Vichy régime. His colleague Sam Day was posted to Angola with a view to opening a US consulate in Luanda.

**T**HE BELGIAN CONGO had a number of connections with Angola and its Portuguese colonial overlord. One of Cadbury's excursions had been to the town of Thysville, which had a major sugar plantation and a refinery that might have been encouraged to expand production to save on sugar imports. The firm was run by a Flemish family but the estate was worked by black Angolans who crossed into Congo in order to earn cash. This they needed not so much in order to buy clothes, as Congolese wage-earners did, but to pay the poll tax imposed by Portugal on workers and on their wives. Angolans had been regular immigrants to Congo ever since the Belgians had first arrived. Some of these Angolans became integrated into the network of Baptist chapels and schools which straddled the international frontier. Second generation Angolans often acquired commercial and technical skills which enabled them to remain in Congo as employees of the many Portuguese commercial enterprises in the colony. By the time of Cadbury's visit 20 per cent of the Léopoldville population were Angolans. Portuguese businesses supplied much of the city with fresh meat and produce, though expatriates often aspired to live off better quality imported foods. The Belgian list of food imports deemed necessary was astonishing to anyone familiar with England during the austerity years and Cadbury pruned it severely before sending it to London under a strictly confidential cover. Alongside tons of butter and cheese the Belgian schedule listed biscuits, chocolate, breakfast cereal, mustard, spice, pears, grapes, jam, marmalade, dried or preserved fruit, dried, condensed and evaporated milk, 20 metric tonnes of Portuguese olive oil, dried onions, pickled vegetables, honey, canned herring, tuna and sardines, bars of European table salt, Ceylon and Kenya tea, dried meat and bacon, black puddings and sausages, quantities of macaroni and tapioca, fresh and tinned yeast, two million litres of table wine and, most important, 200 tons of spirits including gin and Scotch though, it was specified, *not* Canadian whisky. Around 8,000 tons of dried Angolan fish and 2,000 tons of Cape Verde salt were ordered for consumption by Africans. The salt and the dried fish were essential to the mission's main aim of driving locals to work for ▶

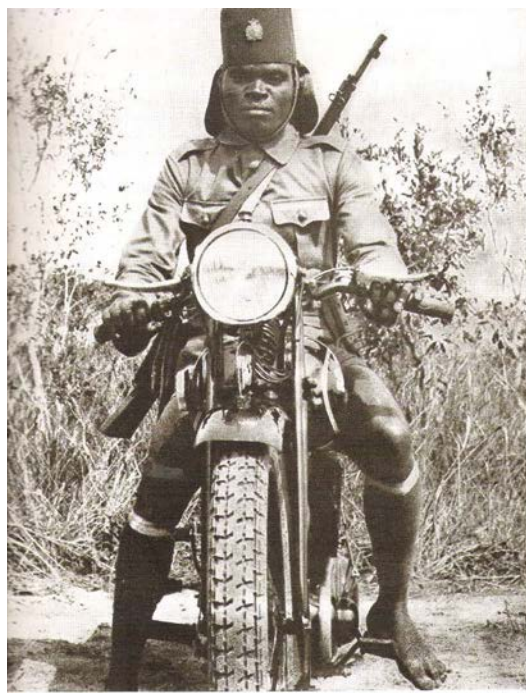
## CONGO

wages and produce raw materials to further the war effort. One surprising aspect of the Cadbury report is how much of the requested food and drink supplies he did authorise rather than how many headings he deleted.

**S**ALT AND DRIED FISH had been the backbone of the Congo commercial economy from early in the Iron Age and, 2,000 years later, both items feature prominently in the 1942 commodity list, as do iron and textiles. Congo had long been a great exporter of metals and, since the ninth century, copper ingots from Katanga had been reaching Asia. Congo also exported gold, though it gets no more than a cursory mention in Cadbury's report. Iron, on the other hand, was an important item. Sam Day, accustomed to American architecture, argued that houses for Europeans should be screened with wire mesh to keep out flying insects (nylon mesh had not yet been invented). Cadbury, though, argued that mosquito bed-nets of cotton would be adequate and much cheaper. He did admit, however, that Congo mosquitoes were so voracious that they clustered under his dining table and bit him through his thin trousers. Indeed at one low point on his sojourn he went down with malaria, this in spite of dosing himself daily with quinine, a natural prophylactic discovered almost 100 years earlier. The demand for heavy iron, rather than wire mesh, concerned iron girders for commercial buildings. Cadbury argued that the quantities of steel ordered were quite unnecessary and that timber could be used instead. He recommended the importation of steel band-saws to cut heavy timbers which could support roofs that would no longer be made of corrugated iron sheets but of locally-made terracotta tiles. The new buildings would also use local, rather than imported, cement but strong paper sacks to carry cement would have to be supplied from abroad.

THE INSATIABLE AFRICAN DEMAND for iron was primarily for tools and utensils. Iron picks and hoes could, at a pinch, be made by local blacksmiths but steel axes could not. Knives, forks and spoons were also imported rather than locally made. In an age before plastic, when aluminium was new and expensive, the African desire for brightly coloured enamel bowls was enormous. These iron vessels ranged from small domestic plates to huge basins 3ft across on which heavy quantities of oranges, bananas, cassava roots and maize cakes could be head-loaded. For cooking stews and soups, metal 'missionary' cauldrons were also in demand to supplement the local supply of pottery tureens. Liquids were traditionally carried in gourds or calabashes, but by 1942 glass bottles were widely in use. Although bottles could be recycled at the local brewery, Cadbury had to authorise the importation of many thousands of metal crown corks. Bottled beer was an alcoholic beverage much favoured by wage-earning Africans.

The textile requirements were the most demanding item for which shipping-space was required. Historically Congo textiles were made, often to high standards, with palm raffia, but by the 19th century cotton cloth, which had long been traded on the coast, began to reach into the heart of the continent. In 1942 1,000 tons of woven cotton textiles were locally manufactured but another 5,000 tons were imported. Maintaining the supply of textiles, Cadbury declared, was the key to driving Africans into the cash economy and so getting them to produce materials



# BELGIAN CONGO AT WAR

Published by the  
Belgian Information Center  
630 Fifth Ave., New York

The cover and inside page of *Belgian Congo at War* showing an African soldier and rubber plantation, 1942.



## Rubber a Future Source of Wealth

It is recognized today that throughout the equatorial region of the Belgian Congo the climate and the sun are suitable for the growing of Hevea, a rubber of the highest quality. These plantations today extend over more than 12,500 acres and production is already 1,000 tons a year.

In the culture of Hevea lies the greatest future of the Congo. The suggestion has been well made that plantation of Robusta coffee be undertaken along with that of Hevea. Robusta is planted between the farnes and begins to produce at the end of three years. The period of waiting for returns on Hevea is shortened and production in the fields increased, while the ever present danger of monoculture is avoided.

Still other products include ivory (500,000 tons a year), beaver, skin and hides, of which important quantities are exported, pyrrh, etc.

Rubber trees of the Belgian Congo.



## *The object of the mission was, as ever, to 'soak up' all available cash in African hands to get men and women back to producing raw materials*

needed for the war effort. He seems to have been surprised that appeals to 'patriotism', such as the 'Dig for Victory' campaign in Britain, had no impact on Africans. There was no such thing as 'patriotic' loyalty to the Leopoldian and Belgian régimes. It was only 34 years since the ending of the worst scandals of King Leopold's murderous reign, when anyone who failed to meet the quota of rubber they were expected to collect might be liable to severe punishment. The Belgian colonial regime that replaced Leopold's mercenaries was less violently brutal but some work schedules had still been driven by fear of punishment as much as by hope of reward. Thus it was that Cadbury and Day had to ensure that style-conscious Congo Africans would find on the market the brightly coloured cotton prints they desired. It was recognised, however, that cleaned and sterilised second-hand clothing, or sub-standard 'seconds' being disposed of by Europe's textile mills, would also sell reasonably well in Congo. The blue, grey and khaki American textiles were much less popular.

**T**HE ANGLO-AMERICAN economic mission realised that, next to the bicycle, the most expensive and desirable item that Africans would save up to buy was a sewing machine. African tailors valued treadle machines and Cadbury authorised 100 treadles as well as 300 hand machines. With an adequate investment, a seamstress could turn imported cloth into a sharp shirt or a fashionable dress. The object of the mission was, as ever, to 'soak up' all available cash in African hands so as to get men and women back to producing raw materials once they had met their 'target' of buying a prestigious and expensive sewing machine or bicycle. Above all, the mission wanted Congo workers to collect rubber and the market was prepared to pay. The price for rubber from trees was one shilling and twopence per pound but traders were willing to pay almost as much for good quality wild root or vine rubber. Low-grade rubber, which was often adulterated, still fetched seven-and-a-half pence per pound on a market anxious to replace Asian supplies. Cadbury's efforts helped to increase Congo rubber production and half a ton of rubber could buy a bicycle. The commercial incentives were never sufficient, however, and compulsory labour was also used. Exports never rose to match those of the American plantations in Liberia, let alone the British ones in Ceylon, but over two years Congo rubber exports did increase to more than 10,000 tons a year.

IF SEWING MACHINES and bicycles were the key enticements to demand in Congo, other items on the consumer list show a fascinating range of hidden needs and potential incentives to drive people into the market-oriented economy. An order for 1,000 wireless sets required all the necessary batteries. A range of haberdashery and garments of linen, silk and cotton required more than 1,000 tons of shipping space, though not the 3,000 tons Belgians had

requested. Shoes and boots were ordered to supplement the output of the local Bata factory, but Cadbury noted curiously that military parades were conducted in silence, since soldiers marched barefoot. A huge consignment of cotton blankets from India was not only approved but increased. The local economic department was more concerned with European aspirations than with the African need for cheap blankets. For the African market, 'tons' of cheap combs were ordered. One curious item not challenged by Cadbury was for 45 'tons' of toilet paper. Bath soap and shaving soap were approved, despite the availability of local bars of laundry soap. Razor blades were also deemed essential, along with a reduced supply of charcoal-heated laundry irons. Before the war Congo had received annually 20 tons of muzzle-loading guns and the necessary supply of black gunpowder. Guns were used not only to hunt food-game but to enhance 'native' wellbeing with loud celebrations. Keeping up morale was part of the mission's brief and Cadbury, the sober Quaker, authorised the purchase of playing cards from South Africa.

Cadbury left Congo in November 1942 but the expertise he had acquired during his four months in Léopoldville continued to be called upon. In 1943 French Congo submitted to Britain an even longer and more inflated list of consumer demands than the Belgians had done. Although Cadbury's relations with the Free French on the ground in Brazzaville had been cordial, relations between the exiled Free French government in London and British ministries were anything but. 'My dear Cadbury', wrote the British delegate to the French National Committee at St James's in May 1943, 'I hope you are not heartily sick of being pursued on the question of supplies for the Free French.' A British consular report from Brazzaville had complained bitterly of 'over-ordering' and 'wastage'. The focus of war had now moved north towards the Mediterranean and French Congo was no longer of great strategic importance. Although Cadbury radically reduced the hundreds of items the Free French requested he did think that an ice-plant should be shipped up to Chad. When, however, it was noted that cement had been requested, to build a new museum in Brazzaville in the middle of a world war, outrage once more exploded. After Cadbury left tropical Africa, his role as a stern assessor of consumption needs continued into 1944, when he was posted to Algeria to assess the requirements of the indigenous population, as well as those of the white settlers. At the time the minister responsible for Algeria was Harold Macmillan, the future prime minister who began the decolonisation of the British Empire in Africa and thus paved the way, in 1960, for the decolonisation of both French Congo and Belgian Congo.

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David Birmingham is Emeritus Professor of Modern History at the University of Kent. His *Short History of Modern Angola* was published in November 2015.

### FURTHER READING

David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin (eds), *History of Central Africa*, volume two (Longman, 1983).

William Gervase Clarence-Smith, 'The Battle for Rubber in the Second World War', in J. Curry-Machado, *Global Histories* (Palgrave, 2013).

Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible* (Harper, 1998).

# REVIEWS

Antonio Sennis in praise of medieval Rome  
Rana Mitter on Sino-Japanese relations • Peter Waldron crosses the Urals



Printing shop, 1632. Copper engraving (coloured later) by Matthäus Merian the Elder.

## SIGNPOSTS

### Books of the Year

From Aristotle to El Alamein, via the Silk Road and Charlemagne's vast empire, ten leading historians tell us about their best books from 2015.



#### Paul Cartledge

It is sometimes said that we classicists and ancient historians have no feeling for, or even an antipathy towards, the sciences, but it's just not true – as Armand Marie Leroi's *The Lagoon: How Aristotle Invented Science* (Bloomsbury) emphatically demonstrates. The ancient Greeks' 'enquiry into nature' (*historia phuseos*) began in the sixth century BC, sparked by encounters with older Babylonian and Egyptian scientific traditions, but reached its climax with Aristotle, the 'master of those who know'

(Dante, *Inferno* 4.131). Leroi does full justice to Aristotle the natural scientist, but especially the connoisseur of fish species flourishing in a Lesbian lagoon.

Paul Cartledge is A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek Culture Emeritus at the University of Cambridge.



#### Averil Cameron

Peter Frankopan's *The Silk Roads* (Bloomsbury) is a book that redirects us away

from Europe, all the way from the Middle East across the Caucasus and the steppe to the borders of China. It does so in a vast chron-

ological sweep that runs from antiquity to the present day. The major powers have always wanted what these vast areas produced – silk, furs, slaves, gold and silver, wheat, gas, oil – and they still do. Beautifully constructed, a terrific and exhilarating read and a new perspective on world history. Averil Cameron is former Professor of Late Antique and Byzantine History at the University of Oxford.



#### Tom Holland

I have two history books to recommend this year: not because I am greedy,

but because my choices make such perfect companion pieces. Both cover immense and continent-spanning sweeps of history; both, at a time when power is palpably shifting from West to East, provide a perspective on the past that is refreshingly non-Eurocentric. Barry Cunliffe's *By Steppe, Desert, and Ocean* (Oxford) tells the story of Eurasia from prehistory up to the 15th century; Peter Frankopan's *The Silk Roads*, although ostensibly about central Asia, is in fact similarly panoramic in its scope and carries the story forward to the present day. Read in conjunction, the two books demonstrate just how wrong Kipling was: East may be East and West may be West, but over the millennia the twain have repeatedly met.

Tom Holland's latest book is *Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of the House of Caesar* (Little, Brown).



#### Jinty Nelson

In a field crammed with political narratives and assumptions about ideological motives, Jennifer R. Davis' *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Cambridge) offers something different and not just because the clarity of her writing matches that of her analysis. Without ignoring Charlemagne's religion, Davis takes an approach to government as pragmatic as Charlemagne's own. How could this vast empire have been ruled? The answers: through delegation, managing diversity and changing adaptively over time. Charlemagne's well-chosen agents used written instructions effectively and learned from mistakes. Davis' judgments convince.



The only *misjudgment* is the publisher's, pricing this readable and timely book at £99.99. *Jinty Nelson is Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at King's College London.*



### Andrew Pettegree

Anyone who loves a historical novel should raise a glass to Jefferson Kline, who is translating into English Robert Merle's epic series set during the French Wars of Religion. The chronicle follows the fortunes of Pierre de Siorac, scion of a Huguenot noble family and a medical student at Montpellier. Newcomers should begin with *The Brethren* (Pushkin Press). *Andrew Pettegree is Professor of History at the University of St Andrews and author of Brand Luther: 1517, Printing and the Making of the Reformation (Penguin, 2015).*



### Alexandra Walsham

Stefania Tutino's *Shadows of Doubt: Language and Truth in Post-Reformation Catholic Culture* (Oxford) focuses on how leading figures within the post-Tridentine church tackled the relationship between language and truth, meaning and morality. It yields rich and surprising insights regarding the nature and evolution of scepticism and uncertainty in

**Stefania Tutino casts the era of the Counter-Reformation in a completely new light**

16th- and 17th-century Europe. Simultaneously, it is a profound meditation on the early modern Catholic roots of intellectual developments that have shaped the historical discipline over the last 30 years: a brilliant study of the theological and philosophical origins of postmodernism and the linguistic turn. By revealing the

legacy of doubt bequeathed by contemporary conflicts, it casts the era of the Counter-Reformation in a completely new light. *Alexandra Walsham is Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge.*



### Sarah Mortimer

My choice is Jan Machielsen's *Martin Delrio: Demonology and Scholarship in the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford). Although the Jesuit theologian Martin Delrio never met a witch, his writings on witchcraft and demonology were among the most influential in early modern Europe. In this fascinating study, Machielsen shows how Delrio first encountered witches in the pages of classical texts and became drawn into a quest to uncover and comprehend the workings of the supernatural. But Delrio was also a celebrated scholar at the heart of humanist culture, whose vivid descriptions of demons and spirits would shape the imaginations of Europeans for generations to come. *Sarah Mortimer is Associate Professor of Early Modern History, University of Oxford.*



### Eleanor Robson

The past is irrevocably entangled with the present, as Tony Blair has reluctantly acknowledged through his admission that the 2003 Iraq War laid the roots of ISIS, the Syrian conflict and the international refugee crisis. Far better historians than Blair see the origins of Iraq's current predicament in Britain's crypto-imperial Mandate of 1920-32. But John Robertson's magnificent *Iraq: A History* (Oneworld) takes a truly long perspective. From the first Sumerian cities over 5,000 years ago, via the great empires of Assyria, Babylonia and Abbasid Baghdad, to the modern Iraqi state, he shows how this complex past has always shaped, and been shaped by, contemporary political concerns. *Eleanor Robson is Professor of Ancient Middle Eastern History at University College London.*



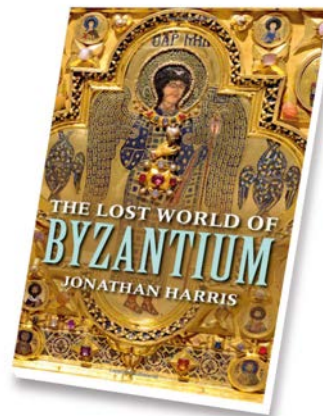
### Lawrence Goldman

Karina Urbach's *Go-Betweens for Hitler* (Oxford) is a fascinating page-turner about Hitler's secret diplomacy in the 1930s, which was intended to secure British amity and then neutrality when he led Germany to war. Largely conducted by German aristocrats, including Queen Victoria's grandson the Duke of Coburg, the book explores a diplomatic backchannel in which eccentric and exotic figures on both sides did the Nazis' work, often in flagrant contradiction of official German diplomats. Urbach combed her way through archives across Europe to construct this image of a decaying aristocracy using their connections in the cultivation of appeasers in Britain. They were not without influence. *Lawrence Goldman is Director of the Institute of Historical Research, University of London*



### David Lowenthal

My choice is Frederick Grice, *War's Nomads: A Mobile Radar Unit in Pursuit of Rommel During the Western Desert Campaign, 1942-3*, edited by Gillian and Colin Clarke (Casemate). Aircraftman Grice's diaries and notebooks yield a vivid account of life and landscape in North Africa during the British Eighth Army's advance from El Alamein to Tunisia. Schoolmaster, acclaimed folklorist, and writer of children's fiction, Grice brilliantly combines the gritty feel of the Second World War army life as daily experience – its commingled privations and miseries, fears and follies, camaraderie and boredom – with stunning depictions of the Maghreb's deserts and dwellings, oases and occupants. For this reviewer, himself a Western Front infantryman, Grice's superb prose reanimates the war's quotidian realities, grim and sanguine alike, with matchless immediacy. *David Lowenthal's The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited (Cambridge), has just been published.*



## The Lost World of Byzantium

Jonathan Harris

Yale University Press 264pp £25

IN WHAT SENSE is the world of Byzantium lost? Jonathan Harris initially answers that important question by reference to the 16th-century French ambassador, Pierre Gilles, who visited Constantinople a century after its capture by the Turks to find that many of the city's Byzantine landmarks had already disappeared amid major Ottoman building projects – perhaps most vividly the bronze equestrian statue of the sixth-century emperor Justinian, whose dismembered parts he witnessed being taken off to be melted down and recast as cannon. However, the book's

**Harris' aim is to present a more nuanced account of Byzantine history, which emphasises its vibrant culture**

title also reflects the author's conviction that the Byzantine world is one which is too often lost sight of in writing about the medieval world, whether almost completely or in a haze of misconceived stereotypes about Byzantine weakness, religiosity and skulduggery. Harris' aim is to present a more nuanced account of Byzantine history, which emphasises the vibrancy of the empire's culture,

## REVIEWS

the extent of its influence and, above all, the empire's remarkable adaptability. His starting point is the sheer longevity across more than a millennium, during which it faced a forbidding range of challenges to its existence.

Doing justice to such a long and complex period of history within relatively modest compass is itself quite a challenge. Harris' approach is to provide an analytical narrative, which divides Byzantine history, from the foundation of Constantinople in 324 to its capture by the Ottomans in 1453, into ten chapters, each of which focuses on a figure or family of central importance, contextualised in relation to the most important themes and developments of

**Harris strikes a good balance between succinct exposition ... and elucidation of broader themes**

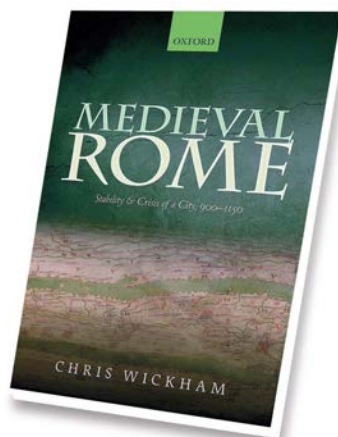
their period. The text, which is unencumbered by footnotes, but is supported by suggestions for further reading, 33 black and white illustrations and five helpful maps, generally strikes a good balance between succinct exposition of the essential narrative framework and elucidation of broader themes in political, military, social, religious and cultural history, thereby providing an excellent and engaging introduction to Byzantine history.

In the later chapters the sometimes bewildering succession of usurpers in certain periods occasionally threatens to overwhelm the narrative's momentum, but the regular inclusion of telling anecdotes helps to create a sense of immediacy. Periodic aperçus add depth to the narrative, as in the author's persuasive qualifications to the idea that Heraclius' Persian campaigns in the 620s were an early version of

religious crusade and his alternative, non-religious explanations for aspects of Constantine V's iconoclasm. The discussion is generally well informed by the latest scholarship, although the notion of Justin I as an illiterate under the thumb of his nephew Justinian has found less favour in recent assessments.

In explaining the longevity and influence of the Byzantine Empire, Harris directs attention to a range of factors, including its adept use of a potent mix of Hellenic and Christian cultural hegemony and, of course, skilful diplomacy. Above all, however, he emphasises the willingness of the Byzantine elite to incorporate outsiders, which is a particularly prescient observation in the context of current events in Europe.

Doug Lee



**Medieval Rome**  
**Stability and Crisis of a City,**  
**900-1150**  
**Chris Wickham**  
Oxford University Press 536pp £35

ONE OF the most resilient clichés in the historiography on medieval Italy is the one according to which, when it comes to urban history, Rome cannot be studied alongside, let alone compared with, any other city of the peninsula. This is because, due to its status of 'papal city', Rome is considered to be too different from the other Italian centres. Atypical in its essence, Rome would be, in a word, unique. The outcome of this is what we can call a papal grand narrative,

one in which the history of Rome is isolated from the rest of Italy and intertwined with the history of the papacy. This cliché about the atypicality of Rome as a medieval city has an equally resilient corollary. Historians have long assumed that the relationship between the Romans and their bishops (let us not forget that this is what the popes ultimately were and still are) was also unique. Far from being, as their colleagues in Italy and in the rest of Europe were, a major focal point of civic identity and devotion, the bishops of Rome would have conflicted with their flock and almost invariably looked at their city as a burden that hindered their ambitions of universality.

In this new, inspiring book Wickham acknowledges that, as for all clichés, the general assumptions that he challenges contain some truth. Rome was indeed, in many ways, atypical: it was bigger, richer and politically more complex than any other city in medieval Italy. And it was at least in part because its bishop was no ordinary bishop. At the same time, the popes had an often rather conflictual relationship with Rome and the Romans. However, Wickham puts these undeniable specificities alongside those economic, social, cultural characteristics that made Rome and its citizens very similar to the rest of Italy. The result of such an approach is a masterly example of comparative history, in which similarities and differences between Rome and other Italian cities are carefully weighed and interpreted.

Rome's political and economic control of its hinterland, the so-called *Agro Romano* (the 20 odd kilometres outside the walls), was greater than that of any other Italian town and this allowed the city's economy to grow stronger and faster than anywhere else. On the contrary, outside the *Agro Romano*, Rome's influence developed in ways that are quite similar to many other cities.

With regard to the city's elites, Roman aristocratic families were individually less wealthy than their Italian counterparts, both before and after the general reshuffle between 'old' and 'new' families

that took place in the mid-11th century. However, they were more numerous and their collective wealth was, therefore, greater, and their structures more complex than elsewhere in the peninsula. As other Italian families, Roman aristocrats also benefitted, politically and economically, from their connections with their bishop; in this they were typical. But the popes were themselves engaged in a political project of much greater momentum than were their fellow Italian bishops and this adds, thanks to Wickham's analysis, complexity to the typicality.

The crisis which originated towards the end of the 11th century, from the Reform of the Church, produced changes which were strikingly similar to, and glaringly different from, those of other Italian cities. As elsewhere, Rome saw the birth of the city commune but, uniquely, it also saw the birth of another, parallel form of government, the papal Curia. This is indeed a true difference from the rest of Italy, but one that does not put Rome at odds with an interpretative model that sees

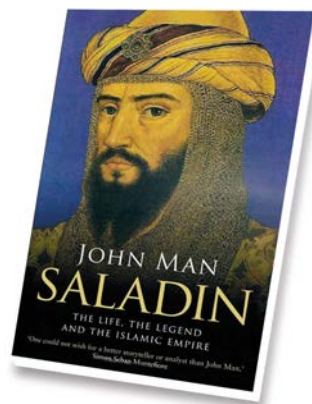
**In this inspiring book, Chris Wickham ... makes medieval Rome so much more colourful and intelligible**

the relationships between elites and bishops as one of the keys to understanding the development of urban society in medieval Italy. This difference serves to enrich that model, nuance it and interpret it.

Italian cities are all similar to each other and all different from one another. We should not be intimidated by this apparent contradiction, Wickham tells us, because this is simply what Italy is: a collage of differences. Having finally added Rome to the collage, thus making it, at once, so much more colourful and intelligible, is one of the many merits of this marvellous book.

Antonio Sennisi





## Saladin

### The Life, the Legend and the Islamic Empire

John Man

Bantam Press 304pp £20

SALADIN – victor over the Shi'i Fatimid caliphate of Cairo, founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, conqueror of Jerusalem – looms large in the history of the Crusades. Praised for his victories, leadership skills and chivalric qualities by supporters and opponents alike, he has been an exemplar of astute and courageous leadership, not just for his contemporary followers and biographers, but also for a wide range of writers and politicians ever since, from Walter Scott to Kaiser Wilhelm II to Gamal Abdel Nasser. Saladin has now found his place in the oeuvre of John Man, author of previous books on Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan.

John Man's *Saladin* is the latest entry in a crowded field and comes soon after the English translation of Anne-Marie Eddé's magisterial study (*Saladin*, 2011). Man, who clearly admires much about his subject, sets himself two objects for his own contribution to the range of biographies of Saladin on offer: first, to distinguish between the factual and fictional elements in the medieval sources on Saladin's career and, second, to understand why Saladin has remained a hero over the centuries after his death in 1193. Given the subjects of Man's previous books, it is unsurprising to see a strong focus here on Saladin's skills as a political and military leader, his abilities on the one hand to forge a state of sorts out of the mess of post-Fatimid Egypt and post-Zengid Syria and, on the other, to

## DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGISTS and historians are making increasing use of exciting developments in digital visualisation. A digital model of a site or building is a versatile tool, which can be easily edited and adapted to research, teaching, online and print publication, museum and documentary use.

Archaeologist James Packer and architect and illustrator Gil Gorski were early adopters of this technology, in the late 1990s, using it to create reconstructions of the Forum of Trajan in Rome. They have now turned to the Roman Forum itself. Their handsome new book, *The Roman Forum: A Reconstruction and Architectural Guide* (Cambridge), is grounded in the abundant archaeological and literary source material for this important area. It is an excellent example of how digital visualisation can enhance (and must draw on) more traditional scholarship.



### Digital Archaeology and Reconstruction

New Publications and Recent Developments

The foundation of the book is a detailed reconstruction of the main Forum square and its surrounding buildings, set (mostly) just after AD 360. Images generated from the model illustrate a history of the Forum's development and a topographically-organised architectural guide to each of its monuments, such as the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina (inset). A concluding section considers the Forum in different eras, including questions of motion and sightlines.

The authors revel in the endless adaptability of their digital creation to illustrate their text. We see elevations, overhead views and plans, sections, colourful perspective views, watercolourish scenes evoking the *École des Beaux-Arts* and plenty of 'entourage' – dramatic lighting, human figures, snowfalls, sunsets and even, in the frontispiece, the authors themselves in Roman dress. More seriously, the potential for this sort of reconstruction to show alternative presentations is explored by, for instance, the

Basilica Julia with and without a conjectural terrace at first-floor level, or different roofing solutions for the Temple of Vesta: there are also experiments with painted decoration (which the authors tend to avoid for lack of firm evidence).

The presentation is lavish, with full-page colour illustrations, diagrams, photographs and several fold-out panoramas and maps. This is a beautiful book, like Andrea Carandini's recent *Atlante di Roma Antica* (Electa), and can be enjoyed as much for the quality of its pictures as for the clear presentation of the information on which they depend. As with Carandini's work, there is scope for an online version, but this book is a landmark in the print possibilities of digital archaeological visualisation.

Digital archaeological techniques are also increasingly used to record ruins in vulnerable heritage sites. Recent outrages, including the barbaric murder in Palmyra of 82-year-old Head of Antiquities, Khaled al-Asaad, leave this and many other wonderful sites heavily damaged and inaccessible for the foreseeable future. A 3D digital record of such sites would at least mean that they were in some sense accessible to scholars and virtual 'visitors' around the world.

The Institute for Digital Archaeology (IDA), a joint venture between the universities of Harvard and Oxford, has launched an ambitious attempt to 'crowdsource' a *Million Image Database* of 3D images of threatened sites and objects. It has developed an inexpensive camera for field users – local museum affiliates, embedded military, NGO employees, and volunteers – to take and upload GPS-tagged 3D images, which will eventually reside in an open-source, Wikipedia-style online database.

The *Million Image Database* is a great example of a collaborative project harnessing technology to record imperiled sites. Imaginative individuals with the right skills can also make a difference: the Palmyra Photogrammetry project is the brainchild of one UK archaeologist, Conan Parsons, who is seeking photos of Palmyra to feed into photogrammetric software. With enough points of reference, this software can compare photos taken from different angles and locations to build up a 'point cloud', which can then be used to generate a navigable 3D model of the site, including buildings now destroyed. If you have photographs that you could contribute, or would like to learn more about any of these projects, please go to: [www.historytoday.com/digitalarchaeology](http://www.historytoday.com/digitalarchaeology) for further information.

Matthew Nicholls

**Saladin was praised for his victories, leadership skills and chivalric qualities ... John Man clearly admires much about his subject ... His Saladin is an engaging, enjoyable read**

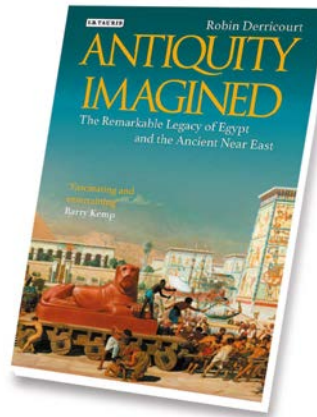
take the war against the Crusader states into the heart of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The story is a familiar one, but Man's engaging prose tells it well and the book is an enjoyable read. He spends quite a bit of time establishing a villain as a counter to the narrative's hero, in the form of the crusading adventurer Reynald de Châtillon. The zenith of the tale comes with the Battle of

Hattin in 1187 and the subsequent execution of Reynald and capture of Jerusalem. Along the way, and this time more unexpectedly, we learn a surprising amount about homing pigeons.

There are some unfortunate inaccuracies: for example, the 10th-century military commander Jawhar would probably be surprised to learn that he was the 'first Fatimid caliph of the new Cairo'. Perhaps the main hindrance to Man's study, however, is that the nature of medieval Arabic biographical sources do not really give him the necessary information to understand Saladin's extremely successful leadership. We are told that a crucial ingredient in forming good leaders is the right balance between security and insecurity early in life, but Saladin's insecurities are merely given as 'the wider insecurity of religious strife, Sunni versus Shia, Islam versus Christianity, local leaders versus each other'. It is hard to see how this would have helped a young Saladin stand out from the crowd.

Harry Munt



**Antiquity Imagined**  
The Remarkable Legacy  
of Egypt and the Ancient  
Near East

Robin Derricourt

I.B.Tauris 288pp £24.95

AFTER 19TH-CENTURY scholarship had placed the origins of civilisation in the 'fertile crescent' from Iran to the Levant, it was tempting to look to these places for the origins of faith, race and mystical knowledge.

In this scholarly account, Robin Derricourt analyses the

ways in which the civilisations of Egypt and the Near East have been creatively interpreted to support latter-day interests. He ponders the paradox that, as greater knowledge of ancient Egypt grew, so too did the stimulus to create alternative interpretations.

The pioneer archaeologist William Flinders Petrie started his career in Egypt as a surveyor measuring the ratios of pyramids. He was influenced by Astronomer Royal, Charles Piazzi Smyth, an evangelical Christian who believed the measurements of the Great Pyramid encoded advanced knowledge of astronomy and prophecies of the future. Petrie's accurate measurements showed this to be wishful thinking and he became one of the greatest field workers in Egyptology, developing rigorous, disciplined techniques.

Despite Petrie's contribution, delusions about the pyramids continued, as writers developed their own fanciful interpretations, of which the most

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staggeringly unbelievable is not that interplanetary aliens built the Great Pyramid, but that the stone tomb was in fact 'a giant water pump for ancient Egypt'.

Derricourt describes the preoccupations of sects such as the Theosophists and Rosicrucians, who believed themselves possessed of ancient wisdom. Moving into mainstream culture, a chapter on mummies sees them animated to murderous status via the rediscovery of ancient magic; and crushed into a powder to be ingested for their reputed medicinal powers.

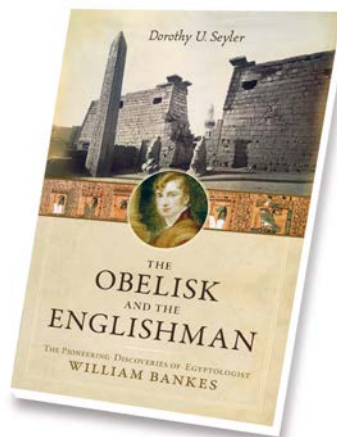
A theory popular in the late 20th century was that Egyptian culture was part of a pan-African black civilisation. This was attractive to African-Americans who seized on a black source for Egyptian and Greek knowledge. The notion served, in the words of one of its promoters, to 'lessen European cultural arrogance'. As Derricourt explains, the theory came first and the evidence served it. Sometimes no substantive facts were required for a theory, such as the declaration that the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel were the progenitors of Great Britain and the US.

The mystical adoration of all things ancient Egyptian proceeded towards an 'Egyptocentrism' that credited ancient Egypt with far more influence and widespread activity than can be substantiated, culminating in the supposed 'hyperdiffusion' of all world knowledge from Egypt to as far afield as China and India.

This is a well argued, well written book; the Narratives of the Holy Land chapter is particularly notable for its scholastic elegance and insights.

In the end, the moral is that in the popular imagination a strongly believed alternative easily takes precedence over measurable fact. It may strain credulity, but the largest mystery in the study of ancient Egypt is why people have continued to create fanciful pasts for a period and place that has been so well documented.

Jad Adams



### ***The Obelisk and the Englishman***

**The Pioneering Discoveries of Egyptologist William Banks**

*Dorothy U. Seyler*

Prometheus Books 304pp £17

THE OBELISK is that which now graces the south lawn of Kingston Lacy, a magnificent National Trust property in Dorset. The Englishman is the Nubian explorer William John Banks (1786-1855) who, having admired the obelisk on the island of Philae on the first of his two journeys up the Nile, eventually secured its transportation to the family seat. He erected it at just the right distance for maximum effect from the house, although his father regretted the ruin of 'my spacious lawn'.

***William Banks was a meticulous surveyor and skilled artist ... but too lazy to write up his discoveries***

William John Banks was a man of complexities. An enthusiastic traveller and connoisseur of Spanish art, he displayed endless good humour but insufficient purpose. Despite being a meticulous surveyor, skilled artist and accurate copyist, he proved too lazy to write up his discoveries (including the important obelisk inscriptions and his greatest find, the Abydos King List).

Returning home in 1820, Banks was fêted in London

drawing rooms and the theatre parties of his friend the Duke of Wellington. His quick repartee, drawn from a prodigious memory, told of daring escapes from armed bandits across the River Jordan and bites from a snake charmer's supposedly poisonous reptile.

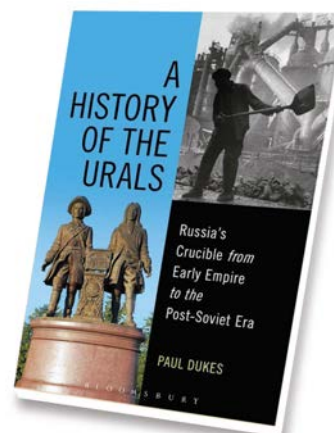
Yet in 1841 he was referred to as a person of 'a wicked lewd filthy and unnatural mind and disposition'. The Queen vs. Banks indictment was the result of his arrest for what was then a hanging offence: a charge of indecent exposure involving a guardsman. Largely thanks to Wellington's testimony, Banks had already been acquitted of a sodomy charge following an earlier encounter with another guardsman. This time he stood no chance. Forced to put his beloved estate in the hands of trustees, the dogged adventurer slunk into permanent exile in Continental Europe.

Dorothy Seyler's repeated use of 'perhaps', 'might have' and 'quite possible' in relation to her protagonist's homosexual encounters quickly begins to irritate. Also, much is made of a speculative relationship with Lord Byron, his lifelong Cambridge friend.

This is a book written by an American presumably for an American market, where 'few have heard of Westminster but everyone of Byron'. Moreover, despite her credentials as a professor emerita of English, the author engages in jarring transitions from past to present tense, compounded by numerous proofing errors. The bonuses are her sound Egyptology, extensive bibliography, and informative illustrations.

Ultimately, Seyler captures her 'Father of all mischiefs' as he penetrates behind closed doors: the forbidden Cairo mosques (wearing Arab dress and carrying a viola) and the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (hiding his face in a handkerchief and feigning toothache). The presence today at Kingston Lacy of one of four works 'borrowed' from the off-limits library at St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai demonstrates that the indefatigable William John Banks left nothing unexplored.

Rosalind Janssen



### ***A History of the Urals***

**Russia's Crucible from Early Empire to the Post-Soviet Era**

*Paul Dukes*

Bloomsbury Academic 272pp £19.99

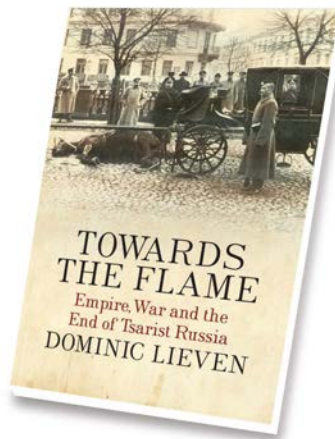
THE URAL mountains stretch for 2,500km from the Arctic ocean to the edges of the central Asian steppe and form the traditional border between Europe and Asia. The range never exceeds 2,000m in height and travellers on the Trans-Siberian railway that traverses the mountains reach an elevation of just 401m. Yet, as Paul Dukes shows, these modest mountains have played a central role in the history of Russia. Their significance lies in the extraordinary richness of the natural resources buried beneath them: in the 1820s, gold and platinum were discovered in Perm province, so that by the middle of the 19th century Russia was the only country in the world to use platinum in its coinage. High quality iron ore had been mined in the Urals since the end of the 17th century, while copper was also found there and for the next century the Urals were the source of Russia's entire output of copper and more than three quarters of its iron. Ukraine overtook the Urals as the centre of Russia's heavy industry during the 19th century, but part of Stalin's industrial revolution at the end of the 1920s included revitalising the Urals. The city of Magnitogorsk – Magnetic Mountain – situated next to an outcrop of pure iron grew from almost nothing to a population

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of some 250,000 by 1932 and its metallurgical complex developed to produce 3.7m tons of iron and steel in 1936. Smelting works, pulp and paper and heavy machine industry plants were also established in the Urals, turning the region under Stalin into the Soviet Union's most significant industrial area, with metal and chemical industries dominating the scene. During the 1930s oil and gas reserves were discovered in the Urals; the Khanty-Mansi district in the northern Urals now accounts for more than half of Russia's output of oil.

Paul Dukes' book places the economic development of the Urals into the overall context of the political and social development of Russia and the Soviet Union with great effectiveness. He shows how, despite the revolutionary changes that have led from the Tsarist monarchy to the Soviet state and now to an authoritarian Russian regime under Putin, the Russian economy has never been able to develop a strong manufactured goods sector. Dmitrii Medvedev, who exchanged the presidency for the prime ministership with Putin, has bemoaned the Russian model of relying on the export of raw materials for economic success. He suggested that the two great attempts, by Peter the Great and Stalin, to introduce an innovative economic system in Russia each resulted in a very high human price, as people were forced to comply with the priorities of the state. The Urals have been Russia's crucible, but they have also been the scene of great cruelty and oppression. Nicholas II and his family were executed in Ekaterinburg in 1918, while convict labour from the Gulag played a crucial role in the Stalinist industrial revolution of the 1930s. Paul Dukes' perceptive book shows how the Urals exemplify the problems that Russia continues to face: can it achieve sustained economic prosperity without retreating back towards authoritarian rule?

Peter Waldron



***Towards the Flame***  
**Empire, War and the End of**  
**Tsarist Russia**  
**Dominic Lieven**  
Allen Lane 448pp £25

HISTORIES of Russia's involvement in the First World War have long turned on the question of whether 1914 caused, hastened or even delayed the Russian Revolution. Dominic Lieven's masterly *Towards the Flame* uses a different lens to examine the decade before the July Crisis, not as a crucial staging ground in the origins of the Russian Revolution but rather as part of the history of empire in an age of nationalism and mass politics. Instead of approaching the autocracy as an ideological anachronism, economically more backward and politically more unstable than the other Great Powers, Lieven presents a 'modern' empire, which shared its rivals fundamental strengths and weaknesses.

Russia entered the First World War for reasons of 'security, interest and identity'. Security meant an attempt to bolster the existing balance of power against the perceived threat of German expansionism; interest meant Russia's desire for predominance in the Balkans and control over the Straits of Constantinople; and identity meant a defence of Russia's status as a Great Power and the leader of the Slavs. Such fundamental considerations also impelled policy-making in Austria-Hungary, Germany, Britain and France in the run up to war.

'In 1914, it was possible', Lieven argues, 'to envisage either a brilliant or a catastrophic future for

Russia' but that future depended on tsarism's ability to negotiate a stable path to modernisation without falling prey either to its Great Power rivals abroad or its revolutionary demons at home. At the centre of Lieven's story are 'the conflicts between empires and nationalisms in east-central Europe'. The Russian and the Austro-Hungarian empires were both in relative decline over the 19th century. Industrialisation, urbanisation and the spread of literacy were all fomenting incendiary forms of nationalism that were corroding the legitimacy of the ruling houses and threatening to disrupt the European balance of power. These problems were much harder to resolve than Anglo-German commercial and naval competition. Yet if the weakening of central dynastic hierarchies was, Lieven suggests, an inevitability; their sudden and bloody implosion in the crucible of the First World War was not.

***Dominic Lieven's masterly Towards the Flame ... is a finely-wrought and compelling account of Russia's final decade of peacetime before the continuum of war and revolution that stretched well into the 1920s***

*Towards the Flame* examines the tectonic shifts in the evolution of European empires but also plunges into an intimate, sometimes claustrophobic world of palaces, ministerial offices and diplomatic missions. In St Petersburg foreign policy in the years and months before August 1914 was conducted 'in secret by the monarch and handful of individuals whom he appointed'. Lieven demonstrates how the fate of Europe, indeed of the world, in 1914 depended not simply on the iron laws of

historical inevitability but on the personalities and (mis-)judgments of individuals with all their idiosyncrasies and frailties.

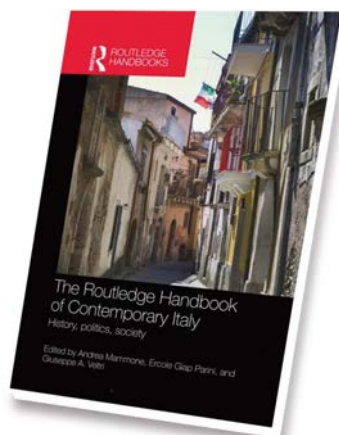
But while Lieven emphasises how this unaccountable and opaque decision-making contributed to a dangerous form of brinksmanship, he also makes plain that the drumbeat for war could be heard far beyond the corridors of power. All of Europe's dynastic empires were now struggling to conduct traditional diplomatic policy in a new era of mass politics, in which public opinion was a powerful and often vociferous force to be reckoned with. Liberals and nationalists in Russia were demanding that the emperor come to the defence of fellow Orthodox Slavs in the face of Austrian aggression.

Lieven's pages are populated by diplomats and ministers, who struggled to mask their government's weaknesses and to press their own advantage while attempting to placate public opinion and avert a war that almost all understood Russia was not prepared to fight. The most prescient prediction of what a conflict would mean for the Russian Empire came in a memorandum penned by the conservative statesmen Pyotr Durnovo in 1914. Durnovo saw that a prolonged war with the axis powers, regardless of whether won or lost, would only hasten the onset of a revolutionary cataclysm. Yet many Russian policy-makers also felt that after a decade of military defeats and diplomatic climbdowns, Russia had no choice but to mobilise against the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914 in defence of Serbia if it was to maintain its position as a Great Power. The greatest pessimists were, of course, proved right.

*Towards the Flame* is a finely-wrought and compelling account of Russia's final decade of peacetime before a continuum of war and revolution that stretched well into the 1920s, and arguably beyond. It is the story of a disaster, which, while it loomed ever larger on the horizon, was never an inevitability.

Daniel Beer





## The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Italy

History, Politics, Society

Andrea Mammone et al, eds.

Routledge 366pp £131

HOW CAN WE understand contemporary Italy? A country where Silvio Berlusconi held sway for some 20 years or so has had some serious image problems in recent years and has struggled to get itself taken seriously abroad. Yet Italy is crucial to an understanding of European history and politics.

As a frontline border state it is at the centre of a new migrant crisis and as a political laboratory it has seen not just the rise and fall of Berlusconi but also the arrival of a figure like Matteo Renzi and the emergence of an extraordinary group called the Five Star Movement, which won 20 per cent of the vote in the last general election and continues to poll well in local and regional elections.

Italy has also seen deep social and cultural changes in recent years: deindustrialisation, large-scale foreign immigration, the transformation of the family unit, the exodus of young Italians searching for work elsewhere and a deep crisis in the welfare state and the economy as a whole. In fact, crisis and decline are two of the key terms which recur time and again when Italy is discussed today – and this decline/crisis shows no signs of abating. The political system appears to be at record levels of delegitimation, so much so that Italian voters, who used

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which led to the destruction of the senate house in a remarkable moment of spontaneous popular anger and violence.

This summer Rome witnessed another grand funeral, that of Vittorio Casamonica, whose family is accused of being involved in organised crime.

The elaborate funeral involved a horse-drawn hearse carrying the deceased from his home to the church (pictured, inset).

Flower petals were dropped from a low-flying helicopter and the

theme from the film *The Godfather* was played in the procession. At the church, banners read 'King of Rome'. The occasion was subject to much criticism, but also shed light on the relationships between parts of Rome that are often hidden from view and the authorities.

Happier spectacles may be expected from the current Pope's announcement of a Jubilee. Jubilees used to come around every 50 years but their frequency (a little like the Roman declaration of a *saeculum* or symbolic century) has increased; the last one was in 2000. This has led to some rather hurried announcements, among which was the association with the Jubilee of the erection of three columns in the Forum of Peace, Vespasian's Forum. Augustus's *saeculum*, of course, involved a hymn, composed by Horace and sung in 17 BC. The marble inscription which

## Flower petals were dropped from a helicopter and the theme from *The Godfather* was played

describes the games is now beautifully displayed in the baths of Diocletian, which have been restored and opened up very successfully.

The houses of the great and good are always fascinating. In Rome, one of the grandest of all is the Quirinal Palace, a huge and dominant building, and the official residence of President Mattarella. Just down the slopes of the hill, in Largo Santa Susanna, another interesting building has been found. In the old Geological Institute, a major temple was discovered a couple of years ago and now late sixth-century housing has been uncovered by a team led by Mirella Serlorenzi. The relationship between the houses and the temple remains unclear, but it is yet another light shone on archaic Rome. As ever, continuities and discoveries abound in the eternal city.

Christopher Smith

ROMAN HISTORY has many examples of extravagance, such as the entertaining fourth-century source Macrobius quoting a pontifical record of a banquet held on the occasion of the election of Cornelius Lentulus Niger in 70 BC to the priesthood of the flaminiate. It was clearly a good evening, which involved not only priests but also Vestal Virgins and Lentulus' wife and mother-in-law. The menu is mouth-watering and gargantuan at the same time: the opening fish course includes oysters, scallops, cockles and mussels; there were thrushes on asparagus, fig-peckers and fattened fowls in pastry; haunches of venison and boar; sow's udders, boar's head; stewed fish; ducks, teal and hares.

Excessive banqueting could get one into trouble in antiquity; Cicero attacked Verres, the governor of Sicily, for his extortionate behaviour in the province, which included demanding dinners. Mark Antony was said (admittedly again by his enemy Cicero) to have indulged so much at a wedding party that he threw up during an assembly the following day. And Juvenal's brilliant satire of the senators summoned to advise Domitian on how to cook a fish shows ways in which food could be a weapon.

Sadly, food and drink have got some of Rome's current politicians into trouble, too. Rome's mayor Ignazio Marino is in trouble over an alleged €20,000 of restaurant expenses and former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi is accused of having swilled down a 240-year-old bottle of sherry with Russian leader Vladimir Putin on a visit to Crimea. Again, the accusation comes from an unfriendly source and is as yet unsubstantiated; but it shows that consumption has always been symbolic.

Similarly, funerals could be moments of high tension and drama. The dictator Sulla's funeral in 78 BC was a sort of triumph as well; there was a long procession, with 210 litters and large statues made out of frankincense and cinnamon. Thousands were in attendance. Funerals could also be riotous, such as Clodius' funeral in 52 BC,

## REVIEWS

to turn out in huge numbers for each election, now cannot even be bothered to vote any more.

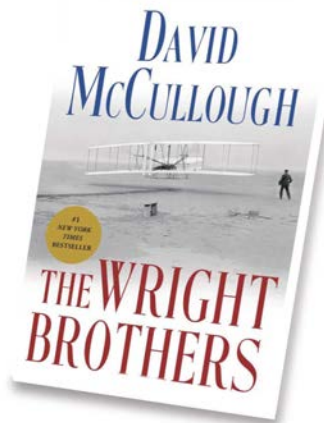
This eclectic collection of essays advertises itself as covering history, society and politics, but the focus is very much on the political world, with discussions of new movements, the right and the left, regionalist movements and political reform.

### *Italy has seen deep social and cultural changes in recent years: including large-scale foreign immigration*

There are extremely useful pieces on the ongoing issues of anti-fascism and debates over public memory, as well as timely studies of clientelism, Italian mafias and the economy. As a self-proclaimed handbook intended almost exclusively for

the library market (given its £131 price tag) this book is not really for the general reader and does not really work as a coherent whole, but will be useful for those dipping in and out and looking for up-to-date material on Italy for reading lists and students of all levels. Strangely, however, there is no specific piece here on Silvio Berlusconi, although many articles do examine his influence and legacy; nor is there much on television (either in a political sense or culturally). There is also nothing at all on sport; a common failing in academia, despite the fact that football fandom is one of the key identifiers in Italy today (26 million Italians profess to be football fans) and the 'footballisation' of Italian society has been identified by many as one of the most important features of everyday life in the postwar period. This is a useful collection, but it is by no means an exhaustive one.

John Foot



### **The Wright Brothers**

David McCullough

Simon & Schuster 336pp £8.99

IT IS NOT EASY to capture the wonder of the first controlled heavier-than-air flight, the stunned amazement of the on-lookers, but David McCullough's recent book gets close. His *The Wright Brothers* is a very readable study that gives an unprecedented look at the two brothers' lives around their first flights and a picture of the world of flight at the

turn of the century. McCullough focuses on the 'human story' of the whole Wright family, a focus well suited to his sources: the letters, diaries, technical data books, documents and proposals, and a 'much larger quantity of private family papers than is generally known', held by the Library of Congress.

McCullough admirably paints a picture of the Wrights' determined and methodical style of working and connects it to their background and personal characteristics. This tells us about the brothers, but not about the achievement for which they are known. For example, their background as bicycle mechanics seems limited in McCullough's account to familiarity with careful mechanical engineering; he argues that the brothers maintained their business (spending significant time on it, in fact) in order to finance their flying experiments. What he doesn't explain is how having designed bicycles influenced the design and construction (or stability) of the Wrights' unique aircraft.



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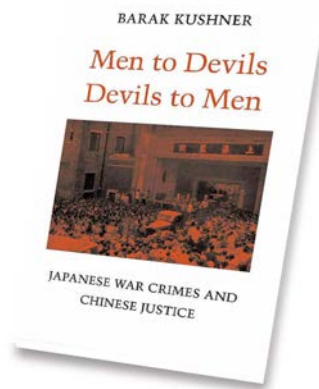


Very interesting, though, is McCullough's documentation of the Wrights' observation of birds. Unlike earlier pioneers of flight, who were misled by trying to fly like birds, crucially the Wright brothers studied how birds glided using the air rather than how they produced power by flapping.

Nevertheless, this account does not spend much time on the engineering details of the brothers' work. The reader cannot really evaluate how the knowledge of the Wrights changed over time as a result of their many largely private experiments, including, as McCullough tells us, their small, privately built wind tunnel, unprecedented at that time. Although, admirably, he does paint a picture of the Wrights' connection to other pioneers such as Chanute, Langley and Blériot, McCullough does not give the reader a clear understanding of how the Wrights' knowledge fit into aviation expertise at the time (apart from the fact that some existing knowledge proved inaccurate). If you want to know what the brothers contributed to aeronautics, you will need a different book. One possibility is the much more technical study based on the Wrights' aircraft, written by Peter Jakab of the Smithsonian in 2014.

What McCullough's human focus allows him to do well is to tell the story of the Wrights' reception: in France, where the Wrights were first seen as fakers but soon embraced, in Dayton and in the United States. He contrasts well the frenzied public interest in flight with the brothers' indifference to public acclaim. And he clarifies that, although the Smithsonian was infamously opposed to the Wrights' claim for precedence, the US war department gave the Wrights a contract in 1908, which included public demonstrations that attracted attention from many civil servants in Washington DC. McCullough's exploitation of a relatively unknown archive turns up important details about the lives of the Wrights, giving us further insight into the men who made the world's first flight and their time.

*Hermione Giffard*



## ***Men to Devils, Devils to Men***

**Japanese War Crimes and Chinese Justice**  
*Barak Kushner*

Harvard University Press 416pp £33.95

IN 1946 the International Military Tribunal for the Far East opened. Known as the Tokyo Trial, it sentenced to death or prison the top Japanese leaders responsible for the invasion of China and the war in the Pacific. These war criminals – including wartime prime minister, Hideki Tojo, and Matsui Iwane, commander at the time of the notorious Rape of Nanking – have become the most famous examples of figures eventually brought before Allied, primarily American, justice.

Barak Kushner's new book moves the narrative away from events in Tokyo and concentrates on China and Taiwan. In

***A timely reminder that relations between China, Japan, and Taiwan have always been in a state of flux***

doing so, he reveals that the relationship between East Asia's greatest powers in the post-1945 era was complex and hugely surprising. In the aftermath of Japan's defeat, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government declared that it would 'repay evil with good' and sought to reach out to leaders in Tokyo in the hope of creating a new, stable and non-Communist order in Asia.

Clearly this effort failed, but the after-effects shaped the region for decades, with many decisions shaped by fears that now seem fanciful – such as a resurgence of Japanese militarism – but which were prevalent at the time.

There are many personalities and events in the book, which bring the era alive. One fascinating case is that of Okamura Yasuji, overall commander of Japanese forces in China during the war, who had been responsible for the brutal 'Three All' ('burn all, loot all, kill all') policy that had devastated many Communist-dominated areas of China and was involved in the notorious 'comfort women' order, which compelled women into sex slavery for the Japanese military. Astonishingly, the Chinese Nationalist government handed down a verdict of 'not guilty' against him. They also helped him resist repeated attempts by the US to ask him to testify at the Tokyo Trial. Okamura's perceived value as a figure who might assist in the struggle against Communism in the postwar world was now seen as more important than his record as a war criminal, despite the devastation his troops had brought to China. Yet there was also ambiguity about the Chinese political spectrum, at the trials of Japanese war criminals in the early years of Mao's China. One might expect that the defendants would have been harshly treated, but many were subjected to a process of restorative rather than retributive justice and were made to come to terms with their crimes in a way that recalls modern 'truth and reconciliation commissions'.

Kushner has written a superb book, underpinned by rich research in Chinese and Japanese, that will force historians seriously to reassess the story of Cold War Asia. At a time when relations between China, Japan and Taiwan continue to be tense, Kushner's book is a timely reminder that relations in the region have always been in a state of flux.

*Rana Mitter*

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Jad Adams** is most recent book is *Women and the Vote: A World History* (Oxford, 2014).

**Daniel Beer** is Senior Lecturer in History at Royal Holloway, University of London.

**John Foot** is author of *Modern Italy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

**Hermione Giffard** is a historian of technology, whose PhD thesis was on the history of the jet engine.

**Rosalind Janssen** is Lecturer in Education at the UCL Institute of Education, having previously been a Curator of the Petrie Museum and subsequently a Lecturer in Egyptology at the Institute of Archaeology.

**Doug Lee** teaches at the University of Nottingham and is the author of *From Rome to Byzantium* (Edinburgh, 2013).

**Rana Mitter** is the author of *China's War with Japan, 1937–1945: The Struggle for Survival* (Penguin, 2013).

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**Christopher Smith** is Director of the British School at Rome.

**Peter Waldron** is Professor of History at the University of East Anglia. His books include *Governing Tsarist Russia* (Palgrave Macmillan) and *Russia of the Tsars* (Thames & Hudson).

# Letters

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## Abyssinian Anguish

'Abyssinia [rose] out of the shadows' not just in the books considered in the article by Jeffrey Meyers ('Abyssinia Out of the Shadows', November 2015), but with the threatened invasion of the country by Italy in 1935.

According to George Padmore, writing in 1936, the threat 'acted like dynamite in arousing and consolidating racial solidarity among Africans and peoples of African descent ... Blacks throughout the world ... rallied to the defence of Ethiopia'. After all, Ethiopia/Abyssinia was one of only two countries in Africa to have escaped colonisation or invasion by Europe. There were meetings and protests against the Italian invasion in the US, in Africa, in the West Indies and in Britain. Funds were collected and men volunteered to go to fight against the invaders.

As a member of the League of Nations, Abyssinia's emperor, Haile Selassie, asked for the League's support to prevent his co-member Italy's proposed invasion. He was ignored. As were the innumerable protests sent by campaigners from around the world. Britain, also a League member, banned its subjects from serving in the emperor's military. Then the League imposed an arms embargo on Ethiopia. Thus it is hardly surprising that Britain did not stop its oil company supplying the Italians with fuel. Some of this oil was used by the Italian air force when it bombed Ethiopia with mustard gas. The British governor of Kenya announced that Abyssinian refugees in Kenya would not be allowed to settle there.

Selassie also fled. Britain offered him sanctuary and on June 3rd he was welcomed by the many organisations which had been campaigning on his behalf, including 'Black British' associations. Having lost the cause,

many organisations turned their attention elsewhere, while some amalgamated into the Abyssinia Association. Sylvia Pankhurst continued to publish her influential journal, *New Times and Ethiopian News*, until 1956.

**Marika Sherwood**  
*Institute of Commonwealth Studies*  
*University of London*

## Demons and Defiants

The wonderful photograph of the Hendon display in 1934 (InFocus, November) does not show Hawker Demon fighters: the aircraft are, in fact, six Hawker Audax aircraft. They are similar in that both types are based on the Hawker Hart bomber design, being metal-framed construction covered in fabric and powered by a Rolls-Royce Kestrel. However, the Audax was designed for Army Co-operation duties rather than as a fighter, the photo shows four of the six with their 'message hooks' lowered (these are hinged from the undercarriage spreader bar and have a hook at the other end so as to pick up messages from the ground, a rope would then be used by the observer to pull it up again), hence its nickname at the time, The 'Art with the 'ook'. The black triangle marking on rear fuselage of the aircraft shows that they are from No. 2 (Army Co-operation) Squadron, RAF.

Roger Hudson refers in the piece to the Boulton Paul Defiant with its power-driven four-gun turret and how 'It became a sitting duck for the Luftwaffe in 1940'. We should remember that when the Defiant was designed it was planned to be used against bomber aircraft of the Luftwaffe and so it had the capability to fire from the side and underneath the bomber to shoot it down. It was not expected to meet single-seat monoplane fighters due to the UK being out of range if these flew from German airfields.

However, the unexpected defeat of France changed that and led to the losses of the Defiant in daylight combat with Messerschmitt Bf 109s over Dunkirk and during the Battle of Britain. The Defiant was withdrawn from operations in daylight during August 1940 and then used as a night-fighter. In this role it was quite successful during the winter of 1940-41, especially when it was equipped with Air Interception Radar.

**Mike Meech**  
*Clacton-on-Sea, Essex*

## Churlish On Churchill

I am writing to express my astonishment at the article written by Mihir Bose in the October edition ('No One is Indispensable'), addressing Winston Churchill's place as a wartime leader.

Although referring to the predictable attacks of Churchill's left-wing opponents, as well as Michel Foot's later attacks, which were interesting as reminders of historical viewpoints, the rest of the article proves to be dubious as an hypothesis.

It appears to rest on a few tenuous assumptions about Churchill's attitudes. He suggests that Churchill never criticised Hitler before the Second World War, or Franco ever, while reserving all his invective for Gandhi.

Churchill spent his 'wilderness years' in the 1930s amassing evidence against Hitler's arms build up in contravention of the Versailles Treaty. Constantly producing this evidence to the government in Westminster, he was repeatedly ignored. When he urged the government to stand up to Hitler over the occupation of the Rhineland, over the Anschluss and over Czechoslovakia, again he was ignored by the proponents of appeasement and labelled a 'warmonger'.

Not criticising Franco was probably an act of common sense, especially during the war,

when the Allies depended on the continued British occupation of Gibraltar.

As prime minister from 1940, Churchill worked tirelessly. He led a successful war effort, which proved more efficient than that of Germany. It was he who developed a relationship with Roosevelt, which enabled the vital Lend-Lease arrangements with the US. He established a necessary relationship with Stalin, despite his better judgment. It was also he who, having enjoyed the power of a dictator during hostilities, accepted with grace the will of the British people that he should stand down from the premiership in 1945.

I am often bemused by the seemingly shallow criticisms of Churchill as a war leader that are made by left wingers, who seem to resent his successes. These viewpoints generally reflect their own insecurities with regard to his place in history.

**Richard Binstead**  
*Fowey, Cornwall*

## Any Relation?

Though we certainly are living in a period when cosy national myths urgently need to be demolished, I was not entirely convinced by Mihir Bose's criticism of Churchill. Nevertheless it was unnecessary of John Jolliffe to mar his otherwise interesting and well-argued letter with a two-word dig - 'any relation?' - implying that Bose's criticisms of Churchill derive from a family relationship with the pro-Axis Indian nationalist, Subhash Chandra Bose.


If Mr Jolliffe has evidence that Bose is influenced by family relationships, as Tacitus was in respect of his father-in-law Julius Agricola, that is an interesting subject, but it requires more than two words of explanation.

**Howard Medwell**  
*via email*



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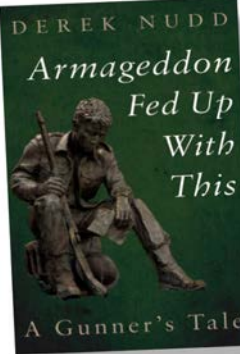


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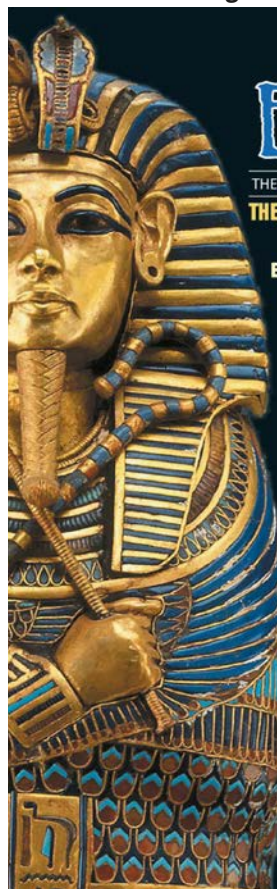
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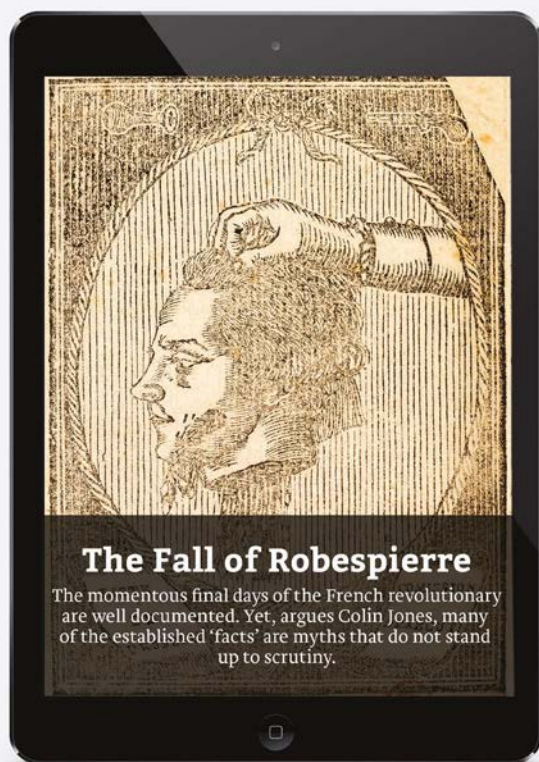
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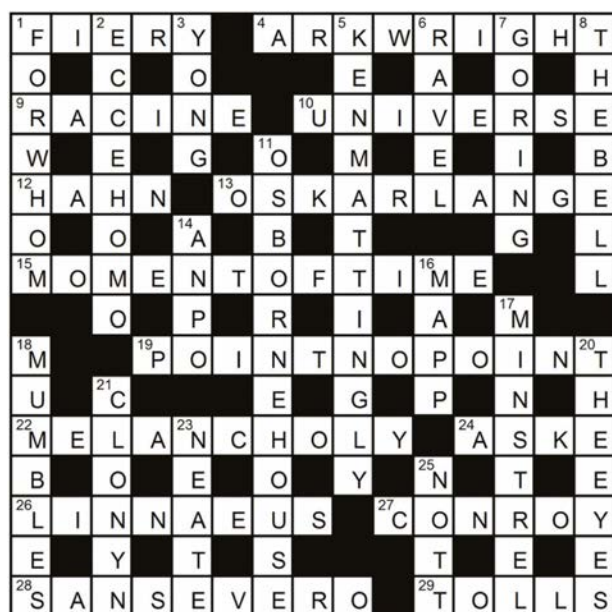
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## October's Prize Crossword



The winner for October is Edwin Self, Sheffield.

## Coming Next Month

### Chess in the Himalayas

When war broke out between India and Pakistan in 1965, the fiercest fighting took place in the disputed region of Kashmir. Yet in September of that year, China moved 5,000 troops into the Chumbi Valley, nestled between Nepal and Bhutan, creating in the words of the Indian prime minister,

Jawaharlal Nehru, 'a dagger pointed at the heart of India'. Andrew Duff explains how the world's major powers became embroiled in a precariously balanced stand-off with the potential to ignite a Third World War.



### Strange Hells

'Shell shock' has become one of the most controversial aspects of the study of the First World War, largely because of the ambiguous and haphazard response of the military establishment towards it, which often resulted in harsh discipline and punishment. Tracing the origin of the term to February 1915, Stuart Archer describes how shell shock could make men celebrities as well as, in the judgment of the future Chief of the General Staff, Viscount Gort, 'lunatics'.

### The Romance of the Romany

In the 500 years since their arrival in Britain, few communities have been as ruthlessly subjected to stereotypes and prejudice as the Gypsies, whether as rustic wagon-driving nomads or as their less salubrious modern incarnation in recent television documentaries, such as *Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. The history of the Romany as we understand it is only partially true, says Jeremy Harte, who confronts the perennial problem facing would-be Gypsy historians: that theirs is a history that has been written and recorded almost exclusively by outsiders.

**Plus** *Months Past*, *Making History*, *Signposts*, *Reviews*, *In Focus*, *From the Archive*, *Pastimes* and much more.

The January issue of *History Today* will be on sale throughout the UK on December 24th. Ask your newsagent to reserve you a copy.

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# PASTIMES

## Amusement & Enlightenment

### The Quiz

- 1** Who, by his own watch, died at exactly 47 minutes past three in the morning on May 26th, 1703?
- 2** What was unusual about the American Civil War veteran Albert D.J. Cashire?
- 3** Which former US Republican Party strategist was the subject of the 2008 documentary film *Boogie Man*?
- 4** Robert Cornelius is thought to have taken the first what in 1839?
- 5** Which economic concept did the French historian Alfred Sauvy introduce in 1952?
- 6** What is the earliest known device for recording sound?



- 7** Who named the Khmer Rouge?
- 8** Who is the only person to have been crowned king of both England and France?
- 9** Who is the resourceful son of Laertes?

- 10** Which King was nicknamed Beauclerc (good cleric)?
- 11** In which war did both sides fight under the Union Flag?
- 12** By what name is the Flavian Amphitheatre better known?
- 13** Which piece of music was reportedly composed in 1741 to help the Russian ambassador to Saxony, Count Kaiserling, through sleepless nights?
- 14** What was the tallest building in medieval Europe?
- 15** Which civilisation takes its name from the ancient Greek for 'land between two rivers'?
- 16** Where is the omphalos?
- 17** Who opined that 'It is never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine'?



- 18** Why did the Egyptian Pharaoh Pepi II (2278-2184 BC) keep naked slaves smothered in honey about his person?
- 19** What did Ptolemy IX (143-81 BC) place on display in a glass coffin?
- 20** What did Johann Wolfgang von Goethe call 'the poetry of life'?
- 21** What did Charles Cretors unveil at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago?
- 22** William Kemmler was the first person to suffer which fate, on August 6th, 1890?
- 23** What did Thomas Jefferson declare would be 'a mere matter of marching' in 1812?
- 24** Who was the Sun King?
- 25** Roughly what percentage of land in Ancient Sparta was owned by women?



1. Samuel Pepys.
2. She was a woman, born Jennie Hodgers.
3. Lee Atwater.
4. Selfie, or photographic self-portrait.
5. First, Second and Third World.
6. The Phonotograph.
7. Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia.
8. Henry VI.
9. Odysseus.
10. Henry I.
11. The American War of Independence.
12. The Colosseum.
13. Bach's Goldberg Variations.
14. Lincoln Cathedral.
15. Mesopotamia.
16. Delphi.
17. P.C. Wodehouse.
18. To distract flies.
19. The corpse of Alexander the Great.
20. Supertition.
21. The world's first popcorn machine.
22. He was executed by electric chair.
23. The US declaration of war against British colonies in present day Canada.
24. Louis XIV.
25. 40 per cent.

ANSWERS



## Prize Crossword

Set by Richard Smyth

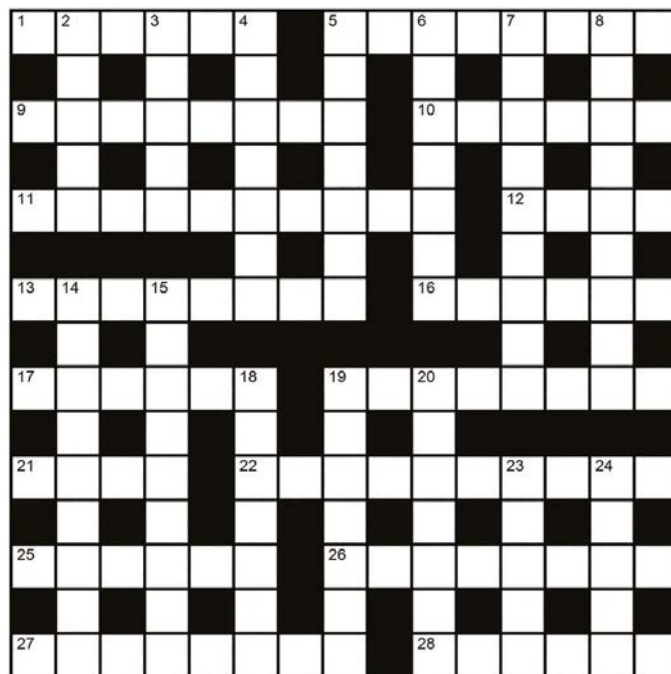
### ACROSS

- 1** US military helicopter in operational use since 1986 (6)  
**5** Character invented in 1927 by the *Westminster Gazette* for promotional purposes (5,3)  
**9** Feminist magazine founded in 1972 (5,3)  
**10** Fedot \_\_\_\_ (1740-1805), Russian sculptor (6)  
**11** Morgan \_\_\_\_ (b.1952), Prime Minister of Zimbabwe 2009-13 (10)  
**12** Pacific island ceded by Spain to the US in 1898 (4)  
**13** Black Hole of \_\_\_\_, term given to a notorious lock-up under the control of Nawab Siraj al-Dawlah (d.1757) (8)  
**16** Jean \_\_\_\_ (1899-1943), French Resistance leader (6)  
**17** Battle of \_\_\_\_, 1862 US Civil War engagement also known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing (6)  
**19** Washington \_\_\_\_, American football team established in 1932 (8)  
**21** 'There's a divinity that shapes our \_\_\_\_' – *Hamlet*, Act 5 sc. 2 (4)  
**22** Term for a form of post-traumatic stress popularised by a 1915 *Lancet* article by Charles Myers (5,5)  
**25** NASA human spaceflight programme launched in 1961 (6)  
**26** Migliorino \_\_\_\_ (fl. 1540s), Italian military engineer who designed fortifications for Edinburgh Castle (8)  
**27** Russian city on the Dnieper, sacked by the Tartars, 1237-40 (8)

**28** 'Our days on the earth are as a \_\_\_\_' – I Chronicles 29:15 (6)

### DOWN

- 2** Samuel \_\_\_\_ (1633-1703), diarist (5)  
**3** \_\_\_\_ Regis, a king's council in Norman England (5)  
**4** Ray \_\_\_\_ (1896-1965), director of *The St Louis Kid* (1934) (7)  
**5** West African state never subjected to colonial rule (7)  
**6** Form of corruption, typified by New York's Tammany Hall machine (7)  
**7** A member of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (5,4)  
**8** Dissenting Christian, such as Elizabeth Gaskell or Joseph Priestley (9)  
**14** Private members' club founded in London in 1824 (9)  
**15** \_\_\_\_ City, Christian's destination in the first part of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) (9)  
**18** German auxiliary, deployed by the British army in the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the American War of Independence (7)  
**19** John \_\_\_\_ (1718-94), Sheffield-born inventor and industrialist (7)  
**20** A *Fistful of* \_\_\_\_ (1964), Sergio Leone western (7)  
**23** In Greek myth, a many-headed monster that dwelt in the lake of Lerna (5)  
**24** Democratic Republic of the \_\_\_\_, state known as Zaire from 1971 to 1997 (5)



The winner of this month's prize crossword will receive a selection of recent history books



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## SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION CHE GUEVARA

### Ernesto 'Che' Guevara (1928-1967)

Argentinian Revolutionary and guerrilla leader, volunteered in 1961 to work in a Peruvian leper colony, a disease whose cause was discovered by ...

### Gerhard Armauer Hansen (1841-1912)

Norwegian physician, who was born in the former Hanseatic port of Bergen, as was ...

### Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

Norwegian pianist and composer of the opera *Peer Gynt*, who married his first cousin, as did ...



### André Gide (1869-1951)

French author whose novel *Les Faux Monnayeurs* was turned into a 2010 French film, featuring Dolores Chaplin, granddaughter of ...

### Charles 'Charlie' Spencer Chaplin (1889-1977)

British comic actor and filmmaker, who was refused re-entry into the US in 1952 as he was considered an 'undesirable alien', as previously had been ...

### Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)

leader of the British suffrage movement, who died on June 14th, 1928, the birth date of ...

By STEPHANIE POLLARD and JUSTIN POLLARD

# From *the* Archive

New perspectives on the Holocaust are possible if we transcend the limitations of German national history and consider it as a global catastrophe, argues **Timothy Snyder**.

## Hitler's inevitable decision?

IN THE SEPTEMBER 1998 issue of *History Today*, Peter Monteath nicely summarised Christian Gerlach's groundbreaking argument about the origins of the Holocaust: that, in December 1941, Hitler made a 'decision in principle' that all Jews should be murdered. However, I am persuaded by subsequent historiography and by a rereading of Hitler's own writings that his worldview was so radical that the concept of a 'decision' is inappropriate; in Alon Confino's apt phrase, Hitler imagined a 'world without Jews' from the beginning. Realising that vision was less a question of categorical pronouncements and more a matter of what was possible. Revenge against Jews was not a decision but an inevitability.

What had changed most since January 1939, when Hitler issued a 'prophecy' that a 'Jewish war' would lead to Jewish extermination, and the pronouncements of December 1941 was knowledge about what was possible. The necessity of eradicating the Jews was present from the beginning. What was new was the awareness that Jews could be eradicated by murdering them. Nothing in the years between 1933 and 1939 had revealed how this might be possible. The measures taken against Jews in Germany, although extreme, cannot be seen as leading inevitably to the mass murder that occurred.

It cannot be stressed enough that the Nazis did not know how to eradicate the Jews when they began the war against the Soviet Union. Himmler and Heydrich could, of course, be confident that the Einsatzgruppen would follow orders and exterminate people defined as political threats, since they had done so during the September 1939 invasion of Poland.

But they could not be confident that SS men would shoot women and children in large numbers. They could not have been sure that the Order Police would serve as the perfect reinforcements, killing more Jews than the Einsatzgruppen. They had not planned to recruit local people as shooters, but instead to instigate pogroms. The pogroms served mainly as a recruiting device for local people, who would soon far outnumber the German police.



**Hitler learned from experience that killing Jews was easier than exporting them**

By December 1941 the Germans, with increasing local help, had murdered about a million Jews in the occupied Soviet Union. It seems reasonable to assume that it was this fact, rather than the preliminary experiments with gassing that Monteath focused on, that convinced Hitler that the Final Solution meant mass murder.

Both Gerlach and his opponents, such as Christopher Browning, furthered previous debates about the origins of the Final Solution by referring to factors outside Germany. Whereas Gerlach preferred a sense of desperation after the United States entered the war in December 1941, Browning referred to the euphoria of victory after initial advances into Soviet territory. Yet since the late 1990s countries east of Germany now figure in such accounts. We have learned, thanks to the efforts of Eastern European historians, that we need consider not only how the Nazi leadership saw the world outside of Germany, but the reality of that world

itself. In his recent landmark study of the Holocaust in Lithuania, Christoph Dieckmann brought together, for the first time, German discussion about the origins of the Holocaust with the local politics of occupation.

For any idea of 'intentionalism' to hold, it must begin with Hitler's conviction that Jews should be removed from the planet. This is subtly but importantly different from the idea that Hitler planned a Final Solution. It allows for the possibility that Hitler learned from experience that killing Jews was easier than deporting them. It also raises the question of under what precise circumstances his global vision could be localised. Here what is necessary is a kind of 'local structuralism', which includes the motivations of non-German actors and the effects of non-German settings on Germans themselves.

Such is the history of the Holocaust as it is now being written: a catastrophe both planetary and local, transcending the limitations of German national history.

**Timothy Snyder** is author of *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (Bodley Head, 2015).



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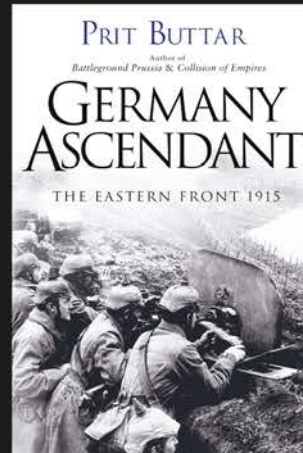
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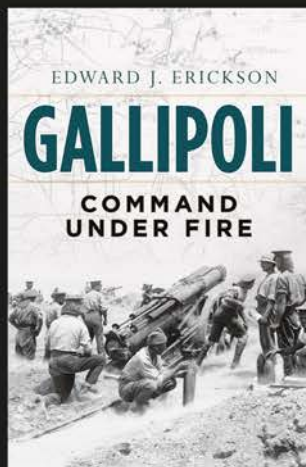
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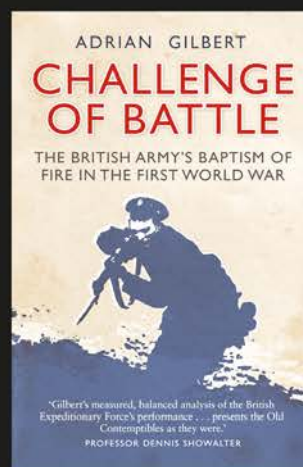
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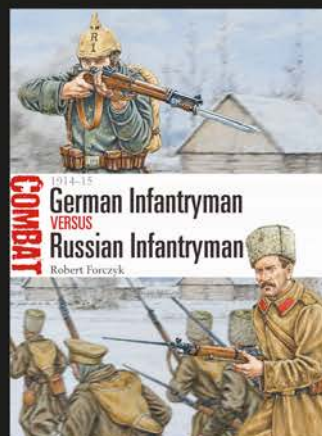
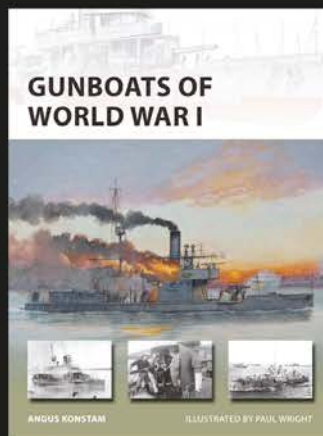


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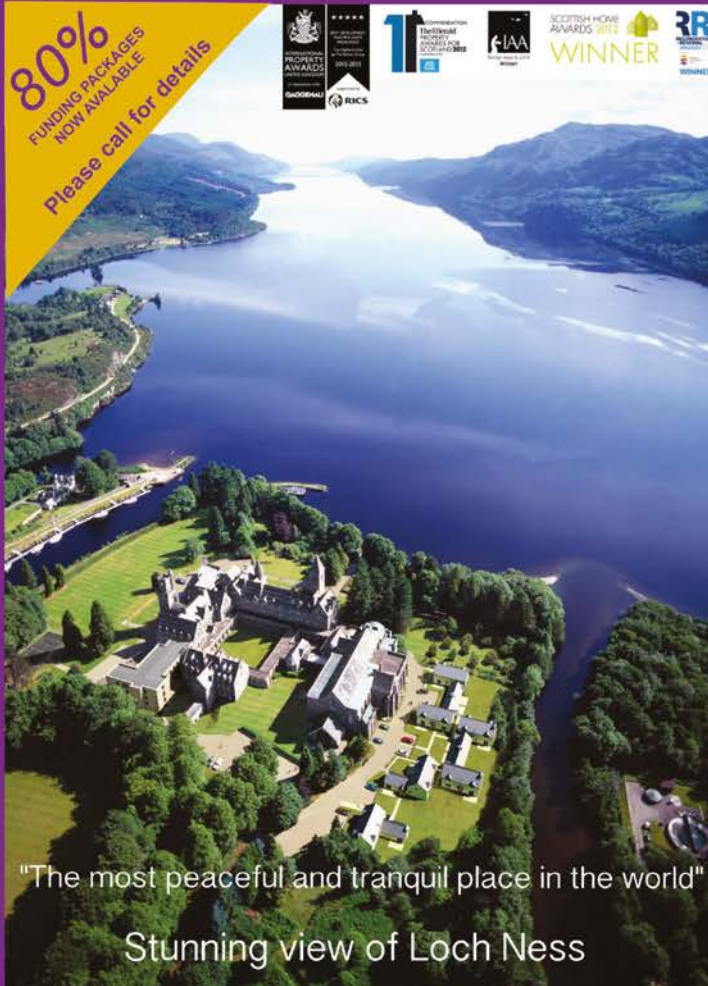
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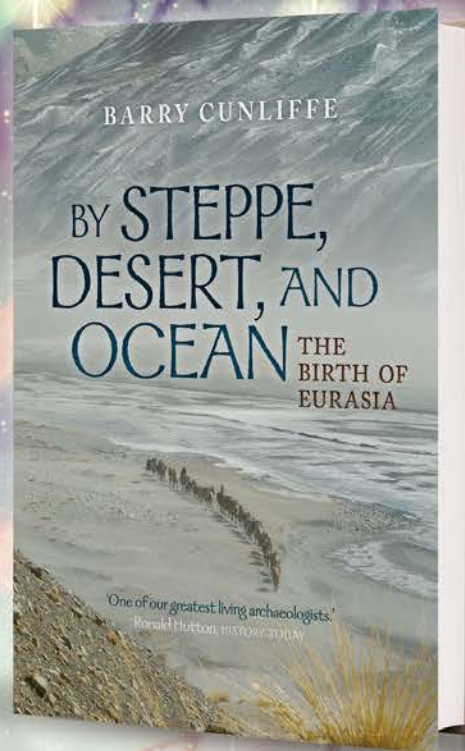
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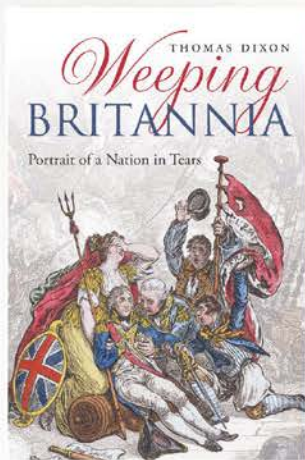
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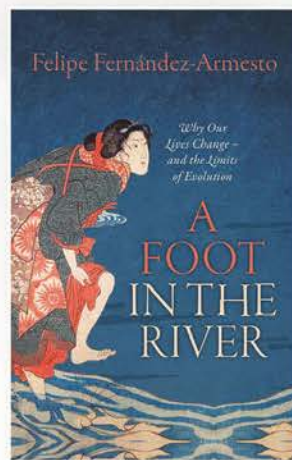
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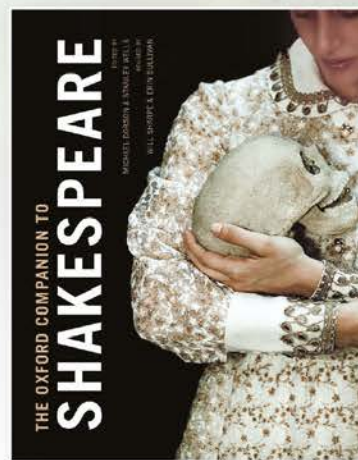
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